SCRIPTURE HISTORY, PRECEPTS AND PROPHECY VINDICATED;

Being the SECOND PART,

Of Chriſtianity not Older than the Firſt GOSPEL-PROMISE:

In ANSWER to

Chriſtianity as Old as the Creation, &c.

——*The Poor have the Goſpel preached to them*, Matt. xi. 5.
——*Thou haſt hid theſe from the Wiſe and Prudent*, (who are ſo in their own Eyes) *and haſt revealed them unto Babes*, (who are humble and teachable) *ver.* 25.
Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, Matt. xxii. 29.

Rode caper vitem, tamen hinc cum ſtabis ad aras
In tua quod fundi cornua poſſit, erit.
Applied to a Deſpiſer of Revelation.

By BENJ. AND.RS ATKINSON,
Miniſter of the Goſpel.

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THE

PREFACE.

IN this ſecond Part, I have conſider'd ſome of the moſt conſiderable Objections, and which appear'd to me the moſt difficult this Gentleman hath produced in his thirteenth Chapter, againſt the Revelation received among us, and owned for Divine: I have paſſed over ſeveral, not becauſe I thought them unanſwerable, but merely to avoid Prolixity; and ſome he hath repeated ſeveral times. This I hope will be both entertaining and inſtructive. I have drawn up a ſhort Introduction, which I thought

proper to go before his Objections, that the Reader might firſt have the full Evidence of the Truth of the Chriſtian Revelation, and then judge whether ſuch Objections will counterballance it. In the Introduction I have alſo obviated and anſwer'd a Difficulty, which might ariſe in Peoples Minds upon reading ſome extraordinary Actions of Great and Good Men recorded in Scripture, which cannot be brought down to thoſe ſtanding Rules by which we are always to act in ordinary Caſes.

I am far from thinking this Part free from Miſtakes, as I am ſenſible the former was not: I am now of the Opinion I miſrepreſented St. *Jerome*, when ſpeaking of *Abraham*'s ſacrificing *Iſaac*, he ſays, *voluntate jugulavit*, *p.* 66. which I tranſlated *voluntarily*, whereas it ſhould be, *in Deſign and Intention he cut his Throat*; ſo that I much queſtion, whether it is true that *jugulavit* qualify'd with *voluntate*

luntate is ſo harſh a Word as *obtulit* without it.

I find alſo what I ſaid concerning the Quakers, *p.* 33. hath been taken amiſs; and I am now informed by ſome as conſiderable as any among them, that they diſown *abſolute Perfection, Merit and Infallibility, at leaſt from the Light within, and running down the Sacred Writings.* At their Requeſt I am very willing to acquaint the World, that theſe are none of their avowed Principles *; only I beg leave to aſſure them, that what I aſſerted before, I thought they had maintained, and my Charge did not proceed from any ill Deſign to miſrepreſent, much leſs reproach them; and this they may more readily believe, if what I ſaid of them, *p.* 18. be reconſider'd.

* A Book entitled, *Some Conſiderations relating to the preſent State of the Chriſtian Religion*, lately publiſhed by *Alexander Arſcot*, which pleaſes me, I am told is approv'd by that Party, as containing their preſent Tenets and Sentiments.

I ear-

I earneſtly beſeech all who heartily believe the Chriſtian Religion, *to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they are called with all Lowlineſs and Meekneſs, with Long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in Love, endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. There is* ONE BODY *and* ONE SPIRIT, *even as ye are called in* ONE HOPE *of your calling.* ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD and FATHER *of all, who is above all, and thro' all, and in you all.*

Laying aſide our leſſer Differences among ourſelves, let us by the Practice of all human and ſocial Virtues, and of divine and heavenly Graces in the Diſcharge of the great Duties of JUSTICE, MERCY AND PIETY, do our Part towards living down Infidelity, and convince Gainſayers, that Chriſtianity can ſupport itſelf by its own native

native Goodneſs, without the Help of PENAL LAWS, which tho' the ſhorteſt, yet in my Opinion is far from being the beſt and trueſt Way to ſtop the Mouths of Adverſaries: for *the Servants of the Lord* (the Chriſtian, and much more the Miniſter) *muſt not ſtrive, but be* GENTLE TO ALL MEN, IN MEEKNESS INSTRUCTING *thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if peradventure God will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth.*

London,
Nov. 4. 1730.

The

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THE INTRODUCTION.

BEFORE I conſider our Author's Objections againſt ſeveral things related in the Old and New Teſtament, I judge it proper to ſuggeſt a few Reaſons which induce us to receive this SACRED BOOK for our guide to Heaven. I ſhall proceed by the following Steps.

I. When the Goſpel was publiſh'd by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, Religion was miſerably corrupted among the Gentiles, *who had given themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs*, and it was not much better among the *Jews*.

The *Gentiles* worſhipped not only a great number of Deities, but the politeſt Nations entertained very ſtrange Notions of their Gods. *Athens* that Seat of Learning *was wholly given to Idolatry*, or was full of Idols. They were not aſhamed, ſuch was their wretched Ignorance and Stupidity! to faſten thoſe Crimes on their

chief God *Jupiter*, which disturb the Peace of Civil Society. How could it be expected that the Worshippers of such Deities as *Jupiter* infamous for his Adulteries, *Mercury* for his Thefts, *Bacchus* for his Intemperance, should be sober, chaste and just? Did not the Examples of their Gods abate their abhorrence of such Immoralities, if not reconcile them to the practice of them? Could it be wondred at, that the Worshippers should endeavour to imitate their Gods, or in other words, that they shou'd be lewd and vicious as they were?

Their Notions in Religion were sunk so low, that they worshipped the most despicable Animals, *Birds and Beasts, and creeping Things*: and the most unnatural Vices were openly committed among them. And how was it possible for them by the mere light of Nature, and unassisted Reason, to emerge out of this Gulph of gross Ignorance, stupid Idolatry and abominable Viciousness, into which they had plung'd themselves?

And did not the *Jews* dote on the Ceremonial, whilst they neglected the Moral Law? They were careful to pay *Tithes of Mint, Anise and Cummin, but omitted the weightier Matters of the Law*, JUDGMENT, MERCY *and* FAITH[a]. Had they much more

[a] Mat. xxiii. 23.

than the Form of Religion? And was not that Form very much altered for the worſe? They paid too great a regard to the Tradition of the Elders, and too little to the Commandment of God, inſomuch that Chriſt charges them *with teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*[b].

Their own Prophets often teſtify'd againſt them, but they hardned themſelves, *and proceeded from evil to evil, and knew not the Lord:* they valued themſelves upon being the Seed of *Abraham*, God's Friend, and deſpiſed the *Gentiles* and look'd upon them with the greateſt Scorn, as if they were made to live in a ſtate of Bondage and Subjection.

Jews and Gentiles were all under Sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no not one. There is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one. Their throat is an open Sepulchre; with their Tongues they have uſed deceit; the poiſon of Aſps is under their Lips. &c[c].

II. Mankind being ſunk into this Abyſs of Ignorance, Miſery and Diſtreſs, is it improbable that a Being of infinite Wiſdom

[b] Mat. xv. 9. [c] Rom. iii. 9——19.

and conſummate Goodneſs ſhould take ſome pity upon them, and find out ſome way to recover his reaſonable Creatures from this ſad and woful Apoſtacy? Could unbounded Wiſdom be at a loſs for an Expedient? Could Almighty Power be unable to accompliſh ſuch a Deſign? or can Any prove it unworthy of the great Creator of all Things, the common Parent of all his intelligent Creatures to take ſome ſteps towards their Recovery? Was not ſome Method highly deſirable, if not neceſſary, to inſtruct and reform the ignorant and wicked World? Is it to be imagin'd that God who made the World wou'd wholly abandon and forſake it?

III. What Method ſo likely, as to publiſh a Revelation of God's Mind and Will to the World? This we believe he did by his own Son, who afterwards ſent forth his Apoſtles to preach the Goſpel, and call Men to turn from their Idols to ſerve the living and true God? If this Revelation be well atteſted, I can't help thinking it better ſuited to the bulk of Mankind, who are not capable of going into a long train of Reaſoning and Conſequences. Our Author *takes it for granted, that there's ſufficient Evidence of a Perſon being ſent from God to publiſh it* (*an external Revelation*;)

Nay,

Nay, I farther own (as he goes on) *that this divine Perſon by living up to what he hath taught, hath ſet us a noble Example* [d].

IV. The Evidence we have that the Chriſtian Revelation is true, is both external and internal:

The internal Marks and Characters of this Revelation proclaim it to be Divine: the matter contained in it is every way worthy of God, and ſuited to our Nature as we are reaſonable Creatures. *To deny all Ungodlineſs and world Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent World,* are Doctrines and Duties, which recommend themſelves to the Reaſon of Mankind. Our CHRISTIAN DEISTS can't object againſt the Morality of the Bible; particularly that Precept of our Saviour's, *All things whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do unto you, do ye even ſo to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets* [e], *Severus* the Emperour and many others very much applauded.

And one would be inclined to judge favourably of other things recorded in that Book, ſince the moral Precepts are ſo very good. Is it credible that Men, who deliver'd ſuch Precepts, as approve themſelves to unprejudic'd Reaſon, ſhould be guilty

[d] P. 9. [e] Mat. vii. 12.

of

of ſo much Weakneſs, not to ſay Wickedneſs, as to interſperſe what they knew to be falſe? Admitting then that the matter contain'd in the ſacred Writings is true and good, the external Evidence will abundantly add to the Confirmation of it.

The Inſtruments employed in preaching the Goſpel were *unlearned and ignorant Men*, of no Influence and Weight. Was it probable that a few Fiſhermen, without human Learning, worldly Power, Policy and Wealth, ſhould convert thouſands to a Religion, that was every where ſpoken againſt, in oppoſition to the Wealth and Power of Princes, the Learning of their Poets and Wiſemen, and the Influence of their Prieſts, who were all combin'd againſt it? The firſt Votaries of Chriſtianity had no better Proſpect than Poverty, Impriſonment and Deaths of various kinds in the World, and if they publiſhed what they knew to be a Falſhood, according to the Principles of their own Religion, they ſtand condemned to ſuffer eternal Vengeance in the World to come. Are Priſons and Gibbets agreeable to human Nature? Or was the Proſpect of ſuch Treatment likely to prove an inviting Motive to any to embrace Chriſtianity? Are Men generally ſpeaking ſo weary of Life, that they will throw it away for a Fancy?

Yet

Yet in View of all this, and notwithſtanding the Oppoſition made by the whole World, the Apoſtles were greatly ſucceſsful in changing the Hearts and reforming the Lives of Multitudes. *And it was the more wonderful* (ſays *Origen*) *that in ſo ſhort a Time Chriſtianity ſhould ſo largely ſpread itſelf thro' the World; for if the Cure of Mens Bodies be not wrought without Divine Providence, how much leſs the Cure of ſo many thouſand Souls, which have been converted at once to Humanity and Chriſtianity, eſpecially when all the Powers of the World were from the firſt engaged to hinder the Progreſs of this Doctrine; and yet notwithſtanding all this Oppoſition, the Word of God prevailed, not being able to be ſtopp'd by Men, and became Maſter over all its Enemies, and ſpread itſelf thro'* Greece, *and thro' moſt Parts of the World beſides, and converted innumerable Souls to the true Worſhip and Service of God.* [f]

The great Efficacy and Power of the Goſpel was abundantly ſeen in that great Alteration which it wrought in all thoſe who were the hearty Embracers of it. The

[f] Ἐνίκησε, μὴ πεφυκῶς κωλύεσθαι, ὡς λόγῳ θεῷ, καὶ γενόμενῳ τοσούτων ἀνταγωνιςῶν ἰσχυρότερῳ, πάσης μὲν Ἑλλάδος, ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἢ τῆς βαρβάρου ἐκράτησε, καὶ μετεποίησε μυρίας ὅσας ψυχὰς ἐπὶ τὴν κατ' αὐτὸν θεοσέβειαν. Orig. cont. Celſum Lib. I. p. 21, 22.

Phi-

Philoſophers did very frequently and deſervedly complain of the great Inefficacy of all their moral Precepts upon the Minds of Men, and that by all their Inſtructions, *politiora non meliora, ingenia fiunt*, Men improved more in Knowledge than real Goodneſs; but now Chriſtianity not only enforced Duties on Men with greater Power and Authority, but awes the Souls of Men with the Majeſty of that God from whom they came [g].

The Power of the Goſpel wrought upon all Sorts and Kinds of Perſons, to manifeſt to the World, there was no Diſtemper of Mens Souls ſo great, but there was a Poſſibility of a Remedy for it: *For they themſelves ſhew of us*, ſays St. *Paul*, *what manner of entring in we had among you, and how ye turned to God from Idols, to ſerve the living and the true God, and to wait for his Son from Heaven, whom he raiſed from the Dead, even Jeſus, which delivered us from the Wrath to come* [h].

Many that believed came and confeſſed, and ſhewed their Deeds. Many alſo of them which uſed curious Arts, brought their Books together, and burned them before all Men; and they counted the Price of them,

[g] *Stillingfleet's* Origines Sacræ, Book II. Ch. IX. p. 317, 318.

[h] 1 Theſſ. i. 9, 10.

and

and found it fifty thouſand Pieces of Silver. So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed [i].

The Word of God had that Power on the Hearts of many, that they readily ſacrificed, what they had formerly ſet the greateſt Value upon, and forſook their curious and profitable Arts.

And if we conſider the Miracles wrought in Confirmation of Chriſtianity, the Nature of them, their Number, and many other Circumſtances, it will appear the Goſpel is not *a cunningly deviſed Fable. The Blind received their Sight, and the Lame walked, the Lepers were cleanſed, and the Deaf heard, and the Dead were raiſed up* [k]. And the Manner in which Chriſt did them, doth not a little add to the Truth of them, with a Word, a Touch, with that Frequency and Openneſs before his greateſt Enemies as well as Followers, and in ſuch an uncontrouled Manner, that neither *Jews* nor *Heathens* ever queſtioned the Truth of them [l].

The great Truth the Apoſtles aſſerted was the Reſurrection of their Maſter, in which they could not be miſtaken, allowing them to be Men of common Senſe:

[i] Acts xxi. 18, 19, 20. [k] Mat. xi. 5.
[l] *Stillingfleet*'s Orig. Sacræ, Book II. Ch. x. p. 358, 359.

For to them he ſhewed himſelf alive after his Paſſion, by many infallible Proofs, being ſeen of them forty Days, and ſpeaking of the Things pertaining to God [m]. And did not they give the greateſt Proof of their Sincerity, by ſuffering much whilſt they liv'd, and at length by ſealing it with their Blood? Beſides could they have wrought ſo many and ſo great Miracles in the Name and by the Power of their Maſter, if he had been detained in the Grave, and kept under the Arreſts of Death? Since then the Raiſing a dead Man to Life is not impoſſible, *why ſhould it be thought a Thing incredible with any, that God ſhould raiſe the Dead?*

Eſpecially if we conſider the Apoſtles had the Power of conferring the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt on others by laying on their Hands [n]. This was ſuch a ſenſible Demonſtration of the Truth of the Chriſtian Doctrine, that we may wonder at the Obſtinacy of the *Jews* in rejecting it; and it is to be fear'd many of them acted againſt the Light of their own Minds, and the Conviction of Conſcience.

Thus the Goſpel cloathed with ſo much Evidence, gain'd Ground, *and mightily prevail'd* every where, not by Force and Vio-

[m] Acts i. 3. [n] See an excellent Eſſay on this Teſtimony of the Spirit in Miſcellanea Sacra.

lence:

lence: *The Weapons of our Warfare* (ſays the Apoſtle) *are not carnal but mighty thro' God to the pulling down of ſtrong Holds* [o]; not by Wealth, Power and Influence, *for you ſee your Calling, Brethren, how that not many wiſe Men after the Fleſh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called* [p]; but by its own innate Goodneſs and Excellence, ſupported by many infallible Proofs, adorned by the exemplary Lives of its Profeſſors, *who ſhone as ſo many Lights in the World,* and confirmed with the dying Teſtimony of its Martyrs, who in the midſt of the greateſt Torments on the Rack, and at the Stake, were not prevailed on to recede from or deny what they had aſſerted, but gloried in Tribulations and triumphed over the Power and Malice of their Enemies.

V. From hence we may advance a Step farther, that Chriſt and his Apoſtles appealing to the Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets as divine Records, we ought to eſteem them as ſuch. If the Miſſion of Chriſt and his Apoſtles was really Divine, it cannot be much debated, whether the Old Teſtament ought not to be received as a Book divinely inſpired; for they refer to it under

[o] 2 Cor. x. 4. [p] 1 Cor. i. 26.

that Character. St. *Paul* ſuppoſes them divinely inſpired, when he ſays, *They are able to make us wiſe unto Salvation through Faith, which is in Chriſt Jeſus. And they teſtify of Chriſt*, which they could not, if they had not been given by Inſpiration of God.

And ſhould it be granted that the Marks of Inſpiration are not ſo many, nor ſo viſible in the Old as in the New Teſtament, and the Difficulties greater, there is enough to ſatisfy them that are not prejudiced againſt all Divine Revelation, and will not be ſo bold as to aſſert, God cannot reveal his Mind more plainly than he hath by his Works without us and our own Reaſon within us.

VI. The moral Precepts of the Old Teſtament are allowed by all to be good, and the ceremonial had their Uſe till the Times of the Meſſiah, and many Miracles accompanied that Diſpenſation, it being neceſſary to prove that *Moſes* and *Aaron* were ſent from God. They that would ſee more of this, may conſult *An excellent Diſcourſe proving the divine Original and Authority of the five Books of* Moſes, *written originally in* French *by Monſieur* Du Bois de la Cour, *and approved by ſix Doctors of the* Sorbon. *Tranſlated by my late Learned*

Learned Tutor the Reverend Mr. William Lorimer.

VII. As the Old Teſtament is a Book of great Antiquity, and was wrote in a Language which hath been dead many Ages, ſo it is not ſtrange, if we meet with ſome Things that are not eaſily accounted for, which have exerciſed the Thoughts and Pens of many learned Men both *Jews* and *Chriſtians*. But is not this the very Caſe with all other ancient Books?

All Languages are in a continual Flux, and Cuſtoms as well as Faſhions change, and are very different not only in different Nations, but in the ſame Nation at the Diſtance of ſome Ages: If there were no Alluſion to ancient Cuſtoms, no old Proverbs, nothing but what is plain and obvious, Perſons that are diſpos'd to cavil, would cry out, All this is modern Invention; for an ancient Book muſt refer to ancient Cuſtoms, and have many Phraſes that were in Uſe in the early Ages of the World.

If Men would lay aſide a cavilling Temper, and conſider ſeriouſly what hath been offer'd to ſolve thoſe Difficulties, they would not appear unſurmountable, as ſome Gentlemen repreſent them; and ought theſe leſſer Difficulties to weigh down the Evi-

Evidence of Chriſtianity ſupported by ſo many undeniable Facts and Miracles?

VIII. It being almoſt an endleſs Task to anſwer every Objection this Author hath made, and ſometimes repeated; I think it may ſuffice to ſingle out ſome that are really the moſt difficult. I have taken more than a little Pains in this Part of my Anſwer, and hope ſome may reap Advantage by them. What I have ſaid about *Jael's* killing *Siſera* and *Deborah's* Song may at firſt View ſurprize and diſguſt ſome Readers; but as the Scriptures record the Sayings and Actions of evil Spirits, and wicked Men only as they were really ſpoken or tranſacted, and we muſt not think becauſe they are related by inſpired Perſons, therefore they are juſtify'd and approv'd; ſo an inſpir'd Hiſtorian may inſert a Song made on a memorable Occaſion without ſuppoſing it inſpir'd, juſt as St. *Paul* cites Paſſages out of *Aratus*, *Menander* and *Epimenides*.

IX. As the Sins and Follies of good Men mention'd in Scripture, cannot be juſtify'd, ſo neither are the extraordinary Actions they did by an extraordinary Commiſſion to be imitated. Is it unworthy of the Bleſſed God to give ſuch a Commiſſion

on

on extraordinary Occaſions, and to bring about his own Deſigns, or to puniſh a wicked and diſobedient People?

Weak or evil-minded Men, it is granted, have made an ill Uſe of ſuch Precedents, but muſt we deny the Goodneſs of God, *which leadeth Men to Repentance*, becauſe it hath been abuſed by ſome to encourage and harden them in Sin?

If God may take away the Life of an innocent Creature, to anſwer wiſe and good Ends, when that Creature ſhall be no loſer thereby; in this Inſtance he takes away no more, than he had given him: What Reaſon can be aſſigned, why he may not take away the Life or Lives of thoſe, who have made a Forfeiture of them; and who in the preſent State of Apoſtacy have not made ſuch a Forfeiture? Why may he not then employ what Inſtruments he pleaſes, to puniſh thoſe who deſerve it? Or doth it follow, that the Inſtruments of Divine Vengeance muſt be filled with Hatred and Revenge in the Execution of ſuch an extraordinary Commiſſion? Will any ſay a Judge cannot pronounce Sentence of Death on a Malefactor, or that the Executioner of that Sentence cannot do his Office without gratifying their private Reſentments on thoſe unhappy Wretches,

who

who are condemned to die by the Laws of God, and the Land?

X. Several Inſtances of this Kind we have in the Old Teſtament, and a few in the New: But if theſe Perſons gave ſufficient Evidence of their being ſent from God, their extraordinary Actions are no more to be tried by the ordinary Rules of human Actions, than their miraculous Operations are to be tried by the uſual Steps and Proceedings of Nature in common Caſes.

Our reaſonable Powers will teach us to diſtinguiſh what is extraordinary from what is ordinary.

What Prophets, Judges and ſuch eminent Perſons were commiſſion'd to do, had not been lawful without ſuch Commiſſion, and we may as well pretend to faſt forty Days as *Moſes* and *Elias* did, or to raiſe the Dead as *Elijah* and *Eliſha* did, as to do ſome other Things thoſe extraordinary Perſons did. To mention but one which this Gentleman paſſeth by. *Phinehas's* killing *Zimri* and *Cosbi* is highly applauded, *and he is ſaid to have turned God's Wrath away from the Children of* Iſrael [q]: But ſhould a private Perſon take this for an Example to

[q] Num. xxv. 11.

be

be followed, he wou'd deſervedly ſuffer for his Ignorance and Raſhneſs.

Theſe things being premiſed, I ſhall now conſider thoſe Paſſages this Writer objects againſt.

CHAP. I.

Of the Infallibility and Impeccability of the Prophets under the Old Teſtament, and of the Apoſtles under the New.

A. ARE you at leiſure to conſider, according to your Promiſe, the Objections made againſt ſeveral Things related in the ſacred Scriptures?

B. I came hither on purpoſe to give you my free Thoughts on ſome of them.

A. Do judicious Chriſtians oppoſe Revelation to Reaſon, as if we were oblig'd to believe and practiſe ſome Things, which are contrary to, and inconſiſtent with the Reaſon and Nature of Things?

B. I think Revelation is built upon the Reaſon and Nature of Things, and carries in it the higheſt and greateſt Reaſon, when I am aſſur'd by the internal Marks of TRUTH and GOODNESS ſtamp'd upon it, as well as by external Evidence, that it came from God.

But then I add, Revelation is an Improvement of our Reaſon, enabling us to underſtand ſome Things in a clearer manner than we could in our preſent feeble ſtate without

without it; and other Things we could never have found out by unaſſiſted Reaſon and the Light of Nature; ſuch as the Mediation of the Son of God founded on his Death, and the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God, which are two grand Peculiarities in the Goſpel Scheme, and very neceſſary, as we are become Strangers to God and our Duty, and have contracted an Averſeneſs to both.

A. Ought we to be certain that the firſt Propagators of a Religion, that depends on Tradition, were impeccable as well as infallible? Or in other words, could not be impos'd on themſelves, or wou'd not impoſe on others[1]*?*

B. That they ſhould be infallible, or not miſtaken in what they declare to others as the Mind and Will of God, and that they could have no worldly Deſign in impoſing on the Weakneſs and Credulity of others, is, I think, ſufficient: and here we may be certain and very eaſy: but *what need is there, that they ſhould be Men, not of like Paſſions with other Mortals?*

We think they were inſpired in what they have drawn up for the Church's Uſe; doth it therefore follow, that their Inſpiration influenced them and run thro' their whole Conduct in Life?

[1] P. 243.

Nay is it not a plain Evidence of their Sincerity and Impartiality, and that they had no Deſign to impoſe on Poſterity, but to declare Matters of Fact, when they have recorded their own Sins and Follies, and the Sins and Follies of thoſe embark'd with them in the ſame Cauſe?

If our Author could prove it unbecoming the bleſſed God to employ imperfect ſinful Men as his Meſſengers on particular Occaſions, he would ſay ſomewhat to his own purpoſe.

The Inſtances he produces of *Abraham*'s, *David*'s and *Solomon*'s Slips and Failures [f], only prove what no one denies, that theſe good Men were not perfect; but doth this prove that they were not or could not be inſpired Prophets?

If theſe excepted Paſſages in their Lives were juſtified in the ſacred Writings, I grant it would be an unanſwerable Objection againſt the Inſpiration of thoſe Writings; but the reverſe of this is moſt true: Doth not the Word of God forbid diſſembling and lying? And did not *David* ſmart ſeverely for his Sin and Folly in the matter of *Uriah* and *Bathſheba*? *Now therefore* (ſays *Nathan* to him in the Name of the Lord) *the Sword ſhall never depart from thine Houſe, becauſe thou haſt deſpiſed*

[f] P. 244.

me,

me, and haſt taken the Wife of Uriah, *&c*[t]. And the 51*ſt Pſalm* is a ſtanding Proof of his deep and ſorrowful Repentance for that complicated Wickedneſs.

Solomon likewiſe did not eſcape ſevere Rebukes in the courſe of Providence for his Polygamy and Idolatry into which he fell in the latter part of his Life. *The Lord was angry with* Solomon, *becauſe his Heart was turned from the Lord God of Iſrael*, &c[v]. And the *Lord ſtirred up ſeveral Adverſaries againſt him*, Hadad *the* Edomite[x], *and* Rezon *the Son of* Eliadah[y], *and* Jeroboam *the Son of* Nebat[z].

It doth not appear from the Hiſtory, that the old Prophet in *Bethel*, who lied unto the Man of God, was a true Prophet, and a good Man: Our Author therefore carries his Aſſertion too far, when he ſays, *we find one Man of God lying unto another Man of God in the Name of the Lord*[a]: but we have this again with ſome Enlargements[b].

A. Is it plain by what our Saviour ſays to thoſe, who had propheſied, and caſt out Devils, and done many wonderful Works in his Name, depart from me ye that work Ini-

[t] 2 Sam. xii. 10——15. [v] 1 Kings xi. 9—14.
[x] Ver. 14. [y] Ver. 23. [z] Ver. 26.
[a] P. 244, 245. [b] P. 328.

quity,

quity, that neither Prophecies nor Miracles are abſolute Securities for Men to depend on[c]*?*

B. Our Saviour ſhows in that place, that Men will be diſown'd by him, if Workers of Iniquity, notwithſtanding their extraordinary Powers to work Miracles: this only proves that neither Prophecies nor Miracles will entitle Men to Heaven and the Favour of God, if they are Workers of Iniquity. I fancy our Author on a Review will be convinc'd he hath miſtook our Lord's Meaning in this place, and that his Citation here is impertinent.

A. Why might not the Power of working Miracles be given to *Judas* the Traitor, as well as the Spirit of Prophecy to *Balaam*, *Saul* and *Caiaphas*?

B. Tho' ordinarily God hath employed holy Men as his Meſſengers to others, yet on ſome Occaſions he hath made uſe of wicked Men to ſerve his own Purpoſes: but it is generally ſuppoſed all the Pen-Men of the ſacred Writings were really holy Perſons.

A. As to the Apoſtles, the queſtion is not, were they without Fault, but were they honeſt Men? Did they certainly know, what they declared to others? For inſtance, were they not capable of knowing, whe-

[c] P. 245.

ther

ther their Maſter was riſen from the Dead? And were they honeſt Men, that we may ſafely depend on what they report from their own Knowledge?

B. Could they be miſtaken in this matter of Fact? Did not they know their Maſter before his Crucifixion? And did not he *ſhow himſelf alive to them after his Paſſion, being ſeen of them forty Days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*[d]*?*

And did not they give the greateſt Proof of their being honeſt Men, notwithſtanding their Failings? Did not they run counter to their worldly Intereſt? Did not they at laſt ſeal this Truth (of Chriſt's Reſurrection) with their Blood?

What our Author's reaſoning amounts to is this, that unleſs Prophets and Apoſtles are entirely free from Sin throughout their whole Conduct, they are not to be depended on; or unleſs they are to be depended on in every thing, they are not to be depended on in any thing; *i. e.* when left to themſelves, they acted like other Men, carried away by their Appetites and Paſſions under ſtrong and violent Temptations, therefore they could never be under the infallible Conduct of the Spirit of God, when they where called forth to publiſh or write

[d] Acts i. 3.

any

any thing for the Good of others. Had not they been *Men ſubject to the like Paſſions with others*, this very Gentleman, it may be, wou'd have ſuppoſed it a mark of Forgery and Impoſture, ſince all Men, the beſt not excepted, have their Weakneſſes and Failings.

But cannot Men be honeſt and faithful in declaring the Mind of God, as they received it from him, becauſe they were not perfect and ſinleſs? Why then ſhould we ſuppoſe Prophets and Apoſtles *impeccable* as well as *infallible*, unleſs he deſigns to prove they were not infallible, becauſe we all agree they were not impeccable?

A. What Certainty have we, that thoſe things taught by them (Prophets and Apoſtles) have been faithfully convey'd down for many Generations together by Men who were far from being impeccable or infallible[c]*?*

B. We have as much Certainty, that the Books contain'd in the Old and New Teſtament were written by thoſe whoſe Names they bear, as we have of any other ancient Book. What Certainty have we that *Livy*, *Cæſar*, or *Cicero* wrote the Books that are commonly aſcribed to them?

Had the Doctrines, Prophecies and Hiſtories contained in the Scriptures been

[c] P. 246.

tranſ-

tranſmitted to Poſterity by Oral Tradition, the Conveyance had been more liable to Cavil and Objection; but ſince theſe things were committed to Writing, the Conveyance of this Book down from one Age to another, is in a great Meaſure free from ſuch Uncertainty as ſome imagine.

Beſides we ſay in favour of our inſpired Writings, they have been more expoſed to the Hatred of wicked Men, than other Books, and therefore greater Care hath been taken of them, by thoſe who received them as Divine Oracles.

A. Admitting Tradition hath been a faithful Conveyancer, yet how can the common People be certain the Scripture hath been truly tranſlated[f]*?*

B. The Scriptures have been tranſlated into ſo many Languages and by ſo many Perſons, in a different way of thinking in many things, that there is little, if any Reaſon, for the common People to doubt, whether the Scriptures as to the main are not truly tranſlated.

A. But granting even that (that the common People may be certain the Scripture hath been truly tranſlated) *yet ſince moſt Texts have been vaſtly varied, and ſometimes contrary Interpretations, and the literal Senſe very often killeth, how can*

[f] P. 246.

we be confident, they don't miſtake their Meaning, except the Reaſon of Things makes it evident[g]*?*

B. Have moſt Texts been varied and vaſtly varied? And tho' contrary Interpretations have been given, hath this been of moſt Texts? Surely this Gentleman will not ſtand to his own Aſſertion, when he thinks it over again; or if he ſhould, I am perſuaded he cannot prove it: He adds, *the literal Senſe very often kills*, this is a darling Phraſe with him, for we had it before *p.* 66, 201, 207, and in this place, and afterwards in *p.* 332.

It is very true, *the Letter kills*, if Perſons don't thoroughly believe and practiſe what is revealed as their Duty, it will not ſave them; *For the words Chriſt ſpeaks, they are Spirit and they are Life*[h], *or the Letter killeth*, i. e. *pronouncing Death without any way of Remiſſion, on all Tranſgreſſors, leaves them under an irrevocable Sentence of Death. But the Spirit*, i. e. *Chriſt who is a quickning Spirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45. *giveth Life*[i].

But do we ſay in interpreting the Scripture People are to lay aſide that Reaſon God hath given them? And will not a right Uſe of their Reaſon help them to underſtand all the Precepts contained in

[g] P. 246. [h] John vi. 63. [i] *Lock* in 2 Cor. iii. 6.

the

the Scriptures, whether *occaſional, obliging only certain Perſons upon certain Occaſions, or others that are of an eternal Obligation, altho' little or no Difference be made in delivering them*[k]? God in his Word ſuppoſes Men to be reaſonable Creatures, and that they are to uſe their reaſoning Powers in reading and underſtanding his Word. What he ſays in the following Paragraph concerning God's commanding for commanding ſake, I conſidered in my former Part[l].

A. Is it repugnant to the natural Notions we have of God to ſwear, much leſs be in a Paſſion or ſwear in Wrath[m]?

B. He might have taken Notice, that in Scripture God is ſaid ſometimes to ſwear when he promiſeth a Bleſſing, as well as in Wrath when he denounceth a Curſe. When *Abraham* had given ſuch an Evidence of his Faith and Obedience in being ready to ſacrifice *Iſaac* his beloved Son, *the Angel of the Lord*, (or the Angel the Lord) *called unto* Abraham *out of Heaven the ſecond time, and ſaid by my ſelf have I ſworn, ſays the Lord, for becauſe thou haſt done this thing —That in bleſſing I will bleſs thee*, &c[n].

Whatever our Author's Sentiments are, the ſacred Penman of the Epiſtle to the

[k] P. 246. [l] P. 25, 26. [m] P. 250. [n] Gen. xxii. 15, 16, 17.

Hebrews did not think it repugnant to the natural Notions we have of God to ſwear, for he ſpeaks of God's *ſwearing in his Wrath, that the unbelieving* Iſraelites *ſhould not enter into his Reſt* [o]. And *when God made a Promiſe to* Abraham *becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by himſelf*, &c [p]. for which he gives this Reaſon—*An Oath for Confirmation is to them an end of all Strife*; you can deſire no more of any Man than his Oath, it is the higheſt and greateſt Security, when they invoke the Divine Being to puniſh them if what they aſſert is falſe, or what they promiſe they don't intend to perform. *Wherefore God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the Heirs of Promiſe the Immutability of his Counſel, confirmed it by an Oath: That by two immutable Things in which it was impoſſible for God to lie, we might have ſtrong Conſolation* [q].

God doth not ſwear for his own Sake, but in Condeſcenſion to our Weakneſs, to confirm our Faith and Hope in his Promiſes, and to awaken our Fear of his Threatnings; we are ſure God never ſwears upon ſmall Occaſions, and when he ſwears in Wrath, he hath great Reaſon to be angry.

[o] Heb. iii. 11. [p] Heb. vi. 13. [q] Ver. 17, 18.

A. Is it not one good Rule of interpreting Scripture, in which All agree, that whatever is ſpoken concerning the great God after the manner of Men, muſt be underſtood in a way worthy of God?

B. It is a good Rule, and by this we interpret thoſe Places of Scripture, where *human Parts and Paſſions are aſcribed to God*[r].

It is no Wonder, that we who know ſo little of the Nature of our own Souls, ſhould be able to take in ſo little of the bleſſed God in this imperfect State: *Can'ſt thou by ſearching find out God? Can'ſt thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection?* &c[s]. *Lo, theſe are Parts of his Ways, but how little a Portion is heard of him?*

A. Is Scripture the beſt Interpreter of Scripture, and by comparing one Place with another, may we not receive Light from thence?

B. Doubtleſs plain and eaſy Places of any Book will help us to underſtand thoſe that are more dark and difficult; had this been remembred by our Author, he would not have made Difficulties of its being ſaid in one Place, *that the Nobles on whom God laid not his Hand ſaw God*[t]. And in an-

[r] Vide Rivet. Vol. I. p. 1103. in Exod. xxiv. 10.
[s] Job xi. 7, 8, 9. Job xxvi. 14. [t] Exod. xxiv. 10.

other

other Place the ſame Hiſtorian *Moſes* ſays, *The Lord ſpake unto you out of the midſt of the Fire, you heard the Voice of the Words,* BUT SAW NO SIMILITUDE [u]. *They ſaw the God of* Iſrael, *i. e.* Signs of the Glory and Preſence of God; for no Man hath *ſeen God or can ſee him* [x]; therefore the *Chaldee* expounds it, THE GLORY OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL [y]: And the *Septuagint*, THEY SAW THE PLACE WHERE THE GOD OF ISRAEL STOOD [z].

Moſes who was then preſent, ſays, *They ſaw no Similitude*; yet this Gentleman, who was not in being till ſome thouſands of Years after, affirms, *there are Texts which repreſent him* (*God*) *for many Days together, viſible on Mount Sinai* [a]; tho' he allows that theſe muſt not be interpreted literally.

A. Don't other Books abound with Metaphors and figurative Expreſſions as well as the Bible?

B. Who will deny it? And are not many figurative Expreſſions as well underſtood as the moſt natural and literal; eſpecially whilſt we are converſant with ſenſible and viſible Things? If ſpiritual Things were not repreſented to us under the Images of

[u] D. iv. 12. [x] 1 Tim. vi. 16. [y] יְקָר־אֱלָהָא [z] τὸν τόπον οὗ εἱστήκει ὁ Θεὸς. Ainſworth in loc. [a] P. 252.

Things

Things we are beſt acquainted with, we ſhould know much leſs of them than we do at preſent.

A. But will not our Reaſon direct us to diſtinguiſh a metaphorical Expreſſion and Phraſe from what is literal?

B. Our Author ſays, *Divines tell us, we muſt recede from the Letter, when the Nature of the Thing requires it; that is, when it contains any Notion or Fact, which our Reaſon tells us, is unworthy of God, as being inconſiſtent with his Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Juſtice, Immutability, impartial and univerſal Benevolence, or any other of his Perfections; or any ways claſhes with thoſe Duties, that Men as Men, or Creatures of the ſame Creator, owe their Fellow-Creatures* [a].

And yet in all this I don't ſee *a greater Scope is required in reading the Scripture, than in reading any other Book:* But if he would think that Man unreaſonable, who requir'd a greater Scope than what Divines allow in reading the Scripture, he hath the leſs Reaſon to complain.

Allegorical Interpreters of Scripture have, I grant, done no ſmall Diſſervice to the Sacred Writings; and yet where they turn all into Allegory, it doth not

[a] P. 252.

follow

follow that they deny the Truth of thoſe Things or Facts, on which their Allegories are founded; and they would reckon themſelves injured, if any ſhould affirm that they deny the literal Senſe, becauſe they join a ſpiritual and allegorical Senſe to it.

Where it is doubtful whether we are to underſtand a Paſſage figuratively or not, it may not be very material, for Inſtance, whether the two Conferences mention'd in the firſt and ſecond of *Job* between God and Satan, be taken literally or figuratively, it cometh to the ſame Thing; for the Deſign of that Hiſtory or Parable (tho' the former ſeems to me the moſt likely) is to ſhow us how ready Satan is to accuſe good Men falſely before God (for which Reaſon he is *called the Accuſer of the Brethren, which accuſeth them before our God Day and Night*[b].) And to ſeek all Opportunities to diſtreſs them, and that no Affliction befalls them but by divine Permiſſion. This may be applied to the other Inſtances, *Zech.* iii. 1, 2.

A. Why muſt we think it unworthy of God to talk to a Serpent as to Satan?

B. If we ſuppoſe Satan made uſe of the Serpent as the Inſtrument to ſeduce our firſt Parents, therefore probably called, THE

[b] Rev. xii. 10.

OLD

OLD SERPENT, THE DEVIL [c]. I ſee no Abſurdity in it.

A. Our Author asks, *how can we ſuppoſe a Serpent could talk to* Eve, *and delude the Mother of Mankind, tho' in the high State of Perfection; even tho' the Apoſtle ſays, the Serpent deceived* Eve *by his Subtilty* [d]*?*

B. The learned Mr. *Joſeph Mede* ſuppoſeth *there is a Law in the Commerce of Spirits and Men, that a Spirit muſt preſent himſelf under the Shape of a viſible Thing.* — He ſuppoſeth alſo, *there is a Law given them, that it muſt be under the Shape of ſome ſuch Thing, as may leſs or more reſemble their Condition; and therefore he concludes that the Devil could not appear in human Shape, whilſt Man was in his Integrity, becauſe he was a Spirit fallen from his firſt glorious Perfection; and therefore muſt appear in ſuch a Shape, which might argue his Imperfection and Abaſement, which was the Shape of a Beaſt.* — *And when* Eve *ſaw the Spirit who talked with her, to have taken upon him the Shape of a Beaſt, yet of the moſt ſagacious Beaſt of the Field, ſhe concluded according to our forelaid Suppoſitions; that tho' he was one of the abaſed Spirits, yet the Shape he had*

[c] Rev. xii. 9. [d] P. 253, 254.

taken reſembling his Nature, he muſt needs be a moſt crafty and ſagacious one, and ſo might pry farther into God's Meaning, than ſhe was aware of [e].

Others are of the Opinion, that the Serpent took of the forbidden Fruit, pretending to have gain'd the Faculty of Speech by it, and ſo deceived the Woman [f].

Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, *ſhe not knowing there were any Devils at all, but well knowing God had allotted her and her Huſband the Cuſtody of Angels, miſtook the Devil that ſpake in a Serpent for a good Angel, and ſo was deceived by him, and ſinned and drew her Husband into the ſame Tranſgreſſion with her* [g].

Either of theſe Suppoſitions will in a great Meaſure eaſe and remove the Difficulty.

A. This Gentleman makes another Difficulty, about *Adam's giving Names unto all Animals, and the Confuſion of Languages* [h].

B. As to the former, *Lucretius* and he ſeem to be of a Mind; for he ſays [i], *It is ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that one Man could give Names to Things, ſince he could not*

[e] P. 223, 224. [f] Abarbinel in Demuis varia ſacra, p. 9. and Dr. *Calamy*'s Sermons on Inſpiration, p. 203. [g] Vol. I. p. 2. [h] p. 254.

[i] Proinde putare aliquem tum nomina diſtribuiſſe
Rebus, & indè homines didiciſſe vocabula prima;
Deſipere eſt, &c. Lib. 5.

oblige

oblige others to consent with him: But was it not easy for *Adam* to transmit the Names of all the living Creatures to his Posterity? When we are grown up, don't we speak as we were taught by our Parents, Nurses and Masters, whilst Children? The most learned *Bochart* gives you many Instances of the Names, answering in a great Measure the several Natures and Properties of Animals [k]. *Brutes if compared with Men, are both stupid and silent, and accordingly have their Names derived from Words, which in the* Hebrew *Language signify Stupidity and Silence.*——From general Names he proceeds to the several Species of Creatures; *a* Camel *is derived from an* Hebrew *Verb, which signifies,* to repay *or* retribute; *for a Camel doth long remember an Injury done him. An* Ass *comes from an* Hebrew *Word, which is interpreted,* red; *because Asses in* Eastern *Countries were generally of that Colour.* Myrrhe *comes from a Word, which signifies* bitter.

[k] בעיר *beir* vocatur, & בהמה *behema*. Quorum prius à stupore, posterius à silentio sumptum est; quia bruta cum homine collata, & stupida esse, & muta constat. Hæc & alia de nominibus generum; jam ad singulas species גמל *gamal* est rependere, retribuere; inde Camelus גמל *gamal*, quia, cætera mitissimum animal, acceptæ tamen injuriæ diu memor est. Asinus חמור *chamor*, à rubro vel ruto colore dictus; quia in Oriente asini plerique rubri. מור *mor* à מרר *marar*, amarum esse. Vol. I. Lib. i. cap. 9.

This was a Sign of *Adam*'s Dominion over the inferior Creatures, and that God had made him Head of this lower Creation, and it was a Diſcovery of his great Wiſdom and Knowledge, that he perfectly underſtood the Natures of all Things.

If God was able to make this World of nothing, why could not he inſpire the Father of Mankind with ſo much Knowledge, as to give Names to every living Creature? What Occaſion is there *that one ſhou'd be almoſt apt to imagine, that the Author of the Book of Geneſis thought, that Words had Ideas naturally fixed to them, and not by Conſent* [l]*?*

Why could not God alſo teach Man the firſt Language at once, and afterwards at the Confuſion of Languages inſpire them with divers Tongues? *Elſe how could their Tongues be according to their Families? as Mr.* Mede *conjectures* [m].

It is recorded as ſomewhat miraculous and extraordinary, *the Lord ſaid——Go to, let us go down, and there confound their Language, that they may not underſtand one another's Speech* [n].

I grant our Author, that *with the Increaſe of Mankind*, and I add, in Proceſs of Time, *there wou'd have been a neceſſary*

[l] P. 254. [m] Diſ. 49. p. 276. [n] Gen. xi. 6, 7.

Variety

Variety of Language, but this wou'd have been ſo many Dialects of the ſame Language, and not ſo many Languages, different in their Characters, Sounds and Meaning, as well as Manner of Reading; ſo great is the difference between the *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* Languages.

A. *Is the Account of the Inſtitution of the Rainbow in Geneſis occaſioned by the not knowing the natural Cauſe of it*[i]?

B. He doth not poſitively aſſert it, but ſays *perhaps*, it was ſo; but tho' the Rainbow was before the Flood a Sign of Rain, doth it hinder its being a Sacramental Sign, that God wou'd not deſtroy the Earth by Water a ſecond Time?

A. What do you think *of the Story of an Angel of God wreſtling all Night with Jacob, and then laming, and bleſſing him, and changing his Name*[k]?

B. Why might it not be real, both a Corporal and Spiritual Wreſtling? for the Hiſtorian ſays, *He* (the Angel) *touched the Hollow of his* (Jacob's) *Thigh, and the Hollow of Jacob's Thigh was out of joint, as he wreſtled with him*—— And it is added, *he halted upon his Thigh:* And the hiſtorical Narrative is cloſed with the Reaſon of a Cuſtom that prevailed among the Children

[i] P. 254. [k] Ibid.

of

of *Iſrael, therefore they eat not of the Sinew which ſhrank, which is upon the Hollow of the Thigh, unto this Day*[l].

And the Prophet *Hoſea*[m] ſays, *he had Power over the Angel, and prevailed; he wept and made Supplication to him*, he wreſtled corporally, and at the ſame time wept and made Supplication, which was the ſpiritual Part of this remarkable Wreſtling.

By this means he obtained a Bleſſing, which in a great meaſure ſcatter'd his Fears, and ſtrengthened his Faith and Hope, that he ſhould find Grace in the Eyes of his Brother *Eſau*, and meet with a favourable Reception: But leſt he ſhould be *exalted above meaſure* with this Victory he had through divine Aſſiſtance obtained, *the Hollow of his Thigh was put out of joint. God wreſtleth with Men by Temptations, and they with him by Prayers and Tears*, (ſays Mr. *Ainſworth*.)

The ancient Jews acknowledged this Angel was Chriſt; our Doctors of bleſſed Memory (ſays *R. D. Kimchi* in *Hoſ.* xii. 4.) *have ſaid this Angel was Michael, and of him he ſays* (*Gen.* xlviii. 16.) *the Angel that redeemed me from all evil. Michael is Chriſt the Arch-Angel, Dan.* x. 21. *Jude* 9. *Rev.* xii. 7. —— *Later Rabbins do*

[l] Gen. xxxii. 25, 31, 32. [m] Hoſ. xii. 4.

feign

feign that this was Eſau's Angel, who ſought to hinder Jacob, but Jacob himſelf refuteth this, Ver. 30. ſaying, *I have ſeen God Face to Face*[m].

A. Muſt Balaam's Aſs have a Number of Ideas, to be able to reaſon with his (or rather her) *Maſter*[n]*?*

B. It is ſaid, *the Lord opened the Mouth of the Aſs*[o], but there is no neceſſity to aſſert, that the Aſs knew what ſhe ſpake: Don't we teach Parrots to ſpeak many Words, of which they have no Ideas? Beſides it is not ſaid, the Lord opened the Underſtanding as well as the Mouth of the Aſs, which had been a much greater Miracle. *The Angel of the Lord did the very ſame thing in the Beaſt, which the Devil did by the Serpent when he ſpake to Eve. This was not the true Language of the Aſs, for Speech is the Image of the Mind, and ſhe had no Idea in her Mind of thoſe Words which ſhe ſpake with her Mouth*[p]. He who gave Man a Mouth to ſpeak, could eaſily open the Mouth of a dumb Creature.

[m] Ainſworth on Gen. xxxii. 24. [n] P. 254.

[o] Numb. xxii. 28. [p] Non tamen fuit hic verus aſinæ ſermo. Sermo enim eſt imago mentis. Et τὸν λόγον προφορικὸν præcedit ὁ ἐνδιάθετος. At in Aſinâ fuit nihil tale. Non capiebat animo, quas ore ſuo proferebat, &c. *Boch. de Animal.* Vol. I. L. 2. c. 14. p. 192.

A. Was

A. Was there not Madneſs in this Prophet, as St. *Peter* affirms, tho' this Gentleman ſays, *in the Story itſelf, there does not appear any thing like Madneſs*[q]?

B. It is very plain from the Hiſtory, that he was very deſirous to go with *Balaak*'s firſt Meſſengers, and therefore God gave him Permiſſion to go with the ſecond, knowing his Covetouſneſs: I ſay it was *nuda Permiſſio*, a naked Permiſſion, for the Angel of the Lord ſays to him, *behold I went out to withſtand thee, becauſe* THY WAY IS PERVERSE BEFORE ME[r]. And the inſpir'd Apoſtle ſays, *he loved the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs, but was rebuked for his Iniquity, the dumb Aſs ſpeaking with Man's Voice forbad the Madneſs of the Prophet*[s]. He was rebuked by the Angel of the Lord, who opened the Mouth of the Aſs. Was it not Madneſs in this wicked, covetous Prophet, for the ſake of a little filthy Lucre, to go contrary to the Command of God, in attempting to curſe that People, whom he knew God had bleſſed? God had juſt Reaſon to be angry with *Balaam* (whatever this Gentleman thinks to the contrary) when *Balaam* went with a Deſign to curſe *Iſrael*, and attempted it ſeveral times[t].

[q] P. 255. [r] Numb. xxii. 32. [s] 2 Pet. ii. 15, 16.
[t] Numb. xxiii. tot. Numb. xxiv. the Begin.

And

And afterwards, THRO' THE COUNSEL OF BALAAM, *the Children of Iſrael committed Treſpaſs againſt the Lord in the Matter of Peor* [u]; which is thus explained in the New Teſtament: *He* (Balaam) *taught Balaak to caſt a Stumbling-block before the Children of Iſrael, to eat Things ſacrificed unto Idols, and to commit Fornication* [x]. So ſome underſtand thoſe Words, *I will advertiſe thee*, I will counſel thee *[y]. This ſeemeth to be an imperfect Speech, which the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt well explains thus; *I will counſel thee, what thou ſhalt do.*

[u] Numb. xxxi. 16. * אִיעָצְךָ *iignatſecha.* [x] Rev. ii. 14. [y] Numb. xxiv. 14.

CHAP. II.

A Vindication of ſeveral Commands given to the Old Teſtament Prophets objected againſt by this Author.

TEaching by outward Signs was very common and ordinary with the Prophets, and was alſo uſed by our bleſſed Saviour, as *when he ſet a Child in the midſt of his Diſciples, waſhed their Feet, inſtituted the Sacrament, &c.* for ſuch is our Dulneſs, that we need ſome external Signs to excite and engage our Attention: The *Jews* in the Times of the Prophets were grown very ſtupid, that God in condeſcenſion to their Weakneſs ſpake to them by viſible Signs to their Eyes as well as their Ears, and yet all did not do: God wou'd ſometimes have his Prophets add to their Word a viſible Sign, to awaken People's Minds to a more ſerious Conſideration of the Matters propoſed to them.

And ſhall ignorant Men pretend to be wiſer than God? Inſtead of reflecting upon, or calling in queſtion the Wiſdom of ſuch Methods of Inſtruction, we ſhould reflect upon ourſelves that we are ſo dull as to render ſuch low Methods neceſſary, that when

when *the Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Aſs his Maſter's Crib, that we ſhould not know* our Maker, *nor conſider* [a] our Duty, Intereſt and Happineſs. *But vain Man wou'd be wiſe, though Man be born like the wild Aſs's Colt* [b]. However in the End it will appear, that the *Fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than Men* [c]. Let theſe wiſe Men value themſelves as much as they pleaſe on their pretended Wiſdom.

I wou'd alſo obſerve our Author only takes notice of the bare Commands given to the Prophets, but leaveth out what follows, declaring the End and Deſign of thoſe Commands; whereas if we attend to the Application of theſe external Signs us'd by them, we ſhall find no juſt Reaſon to be prejudiced againſt them: Neither doth he act fairly by the Holy Scriptures (ſuppoſing they ſtood on a level with other Writings) to recite a part, and not the whole Paſſages he refers to.

Iſaiah's walking naked *was a Sign and Wonder upon Egypt, and upon Ethiopia, like as my Servant Iſaiah hath walked* NAKED AND BAREFOOT —— *So ſhall the King of Aſſyria lead away the Egyptians Priſoners, and the Ethiopians Captives, young and old,* NAKED AND BAREFOOT [d].

[a] Iſa. i. 3. [b] Job xi. 12. [c] 1 Cor. i. 25.
[d] Iſa. xx. 3, 4.

And how we are to underſtand their being naked, is explained in the Cloſe of the Verſe.

And by the marring of *Jeremy*'s Linen Girdle God prefigured the Deſtruction of his People, *thus ſays the Lord, after this manner I will marr the Pride of Judah, and the great Pride of Jeruſalem*[e].

So by *Ezekiel*'s beſieging *Jeruſalem* portrayed on a Tile, and lying on his left Side firſt, and his right Side afterwards, God repreſented to the *Jews* their juſt Puniſhment. The Commands given to him, *Chap.* iv. are applied, and the Meaning of them declared in the following Chapter from the 5th Verſe.

But let us proceed to the particular Objections.

A. He asks, *how many Commands did God give his Prophets, which if taken according to the Letter ſeem unworthy of God, as making them act like Madmen and Idiots? As for inſtance, the Prophet Iſaiah walk'd for three Years together naked for a Sign*[f].

B. We are not obliged to ſuppoſe that he was quite naked, becauſe he was commanded, only *to looſe the Sackcloth from off his Loins, and put off his Shoe from his Foot*[g]. Probably he had put on Sack-

[e] Jer. xiii. 9. [f] P. 225. [g] Iſa. xx. 2.

cloth on account of the Captivity of the Ten Tribes.

He is ſaid to be naked, *i. e. nudatus veſte propheticâ*, having laid aſide his Prophetick Garment. Naked is often put in Scripture for partial Nakedneſs, *thus King Saul ſtripped off his Clothes alſo and propheſied—— And lay down* NAKED *all that Day and all that Night*[h]. *And St. Peter girt his Fiſher's Coat to him (for he was* NAKED)[i].

He is alſo ſaid to be naked, who is but indifferently clothed, NAKED *and ye clothed me*[k]. *If a Brother or Siſter be* NAKED[l], *i. e.* indifferently clothed, or clothed in Rags; ſo the Apoſtles are ſaid to be NAKED[m]. He is ſaid to be FASTING who eats but little[n]. You may alſo compare *Iſa.* xxxii. 11. with *Exod.* xxxiii. 4, 5. and *Acts* xix. 16. *Vide Poli Syn.* in *Iſa.* xx. 3.

Some are of Opinion, by Sackcloth is meant a thick rough Garment, ſuch as Prophets uſe to wear—— *neither ſhall they wear a rough Garment to deceive*[o]. See alſo 2 *Kings* i. 8. and *Matth.* iii. 4.

And what if *Iſaiah*'s walking naked for three Years was only for three Days? A Day is ſometimes put for a Year. *Ezekiel*

[h] 1 Sam. xix. 24. [i] John xxi. 7. [k] Matth. xxv. 36.
[l] Jam. ii. 15. [m] 1 Cor. iv. 11. [n] Acts xxvii. 33.
[o] Zech. 13. 4.

was

was to lie on his left Side three hundred and ninety Days; and afterwards forty Days on his right Side, a Day for a Year [p]. See *Numb.* xiv. 33, 34.

A. Was the Prophet *Hoſea* a Prieſt? as this Gentleman aſſerts [q].

B. He calls himſelf *the Son of Beeri* [r]. But this Aſſertion (tho' without any Foundation in Scripture) makes the Command given him to take a Wife of Whoredoms contradict another Command, by which the Prieſts were forbid *taking a Wife that was an Whore, or profane, or a Woman put away from her Husband* [s]. But admitting he took ſuch an one, ſhe might be a Penitent as *Mary Magdalen* was.

Tho' I find the moſt learned and ſober Divines are of Opinion, that this was done only in a Viſion; and the plain Deſign of it was, to repreſent the monſtrous Wickedneſs of the *Jews* in departing from God, which in a profeſſing People in Covenant with God is compared to Adultery [t]. Or the Land was ſo full of Whoredoms, that if he took a Wife, ſhe wou'd be of that infamous Character.

Segnius irritant animos demiſſa per aurem,
Quam quæ ſunt oculis ſubjecta fidelibus.

[p] Ezek. iv. 4, 5, 6. [q] P. 256. [r] Hoſ. i. 1.
[s] Lev. xxi. 7. [t] Rivet. Vol. II. p. 504.

A. How

A. How are we to underſtand the following Paſſages? *O Lord, thou haſt deceived me, and I was deceived*[u]*: Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a Liar, and as the Waters that fail*[x].

B. As to the former, the Prophet was in Priſon in the Stocks, ſome think he means, God had brought him into that Affliction and Trouble which he did not expect. Others imagine, he only perſonates his Adverſaries, *q. d.* If I am deceived, and have propheſied falſe Things, then God hath deceived me, but ſeeing he can neither deceive, nor be deceived, what I have threaten'd in his Name, will come to paſs. I think the *Hebrew* Word * *Pathah* may be tranſlated PERSUADED. So it is uſed *Job* xxxi. 9. *Prov.* xvi. 29. and xx. 19.

The latter is plain enough, *wilt thou be to me a Liar?* No, I am ſure thou wilt, thou canſt not be a Liar; for he is a *God of Truth, who cannot lie.*

A. Is he not greatly miſtaken, when he chargeth that upon God, which was a Proverb uſed among the *Jews?* His Words are, *in another Prophet the Lord ſays, the Days are prolonged, and every Viſion faileth*[y].

[u] Jer. xx. 7. [x] Jer. xv. 18. * פתח [y] P. 265.

B. The

B. The Recital of the whole Verſe is a ſufficient Anſwer to his Objection, and fully diſcovers his Miſtake. *Son of Man what is that Proverb, that you have in the Land of Iſrael, ſaying, the Days, &c. Tell them therefore, thus ſaith the Lord God, I will make this Proverb to ceaſe, &c.*[z] It was a PROVERB uſed among the Children of *Iſrael*, and not what the Lord had firſt ſpoken to them.

A. But doth not the Lord ſay, if the Prophet be deceived, when he hath ſpoken a Thing that the Lord hath deceived him[a]*?*

B. Had our Author conſider'd well the whole Paſſage, he wou'd not deceive himſelf, nor miſlead his Readers.

The Man who conſults the Prophet is charged with SEPARATING HIMSELF FROM THE LORD, AND SETTING UP HIS IDOLS IN HIS HEART, *&c.*[b]. And was ſuch a Man likely to be directed by that God, from whom he *ſeparated* himſelf? The Prophet alſo he conſults was a falſe or deceived Prophet, for it follows——*I will ſtretch out my Hand upon him* (the Prophet) *and will deſtroy him from the midſt of my People Iſrael*[c]. Thus when Perſons don't *receive the Love of the Truth that they might be ſaved,*

[z] Jer. xii, 22, 23. [a] P. 256. [b] Jer. xiv. 7.
[c] Ver. 9.

God

God gives them up to ſtrong Deluſions to believe a Lie [a].

A. Don't the Prophet Jeremy ſay, Lord God, ſurely thou haſt greatly deceived this People [b]?

B. But what if this be read interrogatively? *Haſt* thou ſurely? Is it poſſible, that thou ſhouldſt deceive them with vain Hopes? Or if we read the Words, as they ſtand in our Tranſlation, God is ſaid to deceive them, becauſe he ſuffered falſe Prophets, to whoſe Guidance and Conduct they had given up themſelves, to deceive them. So we may underſtand the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *why, O Lord, haſt thou made us to err* [c]? *Why haſt thou ſuffered us?* So the *Arabick* tranſlates it; and the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt, *why haſt thou caſt us off, or made us depart from thee?* Our Author hath turned it into an Affirmative, *O Lord, thou haſt made us err* [d]; whereas it ſtands in the Form of a Queſtion.

A. Did God falſify his Word or Oaths, when he ſaid to the Children of Iſrael, ye ſhall not come into the Land, concerning which I ſware, &c. [e]

B. No, for it was upon CONDITION of their keeping God's Commands, *now therefore if you will obey my Voice indeed, and*

[a] 2 Theſſ. ii. 10, 11. [b] Jer. iv. 10. [c] Iſa. lxiii. 17.
[d] P. 257. [e] Ibidem.

keep my Covenant, then ye ſhall be a peculiar Treaſure, &c.[f] And is not a Covenant always mutual and conditional? In that very Pſalm he refers to, the Condition is expreſly mentioned, *if his Children forſake my Law and walk not in my Judgments; if they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, then will I viſit their Tranſgreſſions with the Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes. Nevertheleſs my Loving-kindneſs will I not utterly take away,* &c.[g] Doth it follow, that God's Loving-kindneſs was taken away from *David*, becauſe for their Sins he ſuffered Enemies to triumph over them for the preſent? And the Promiſes to Meſſiah the true *David* are kept ſacred and inviolable.

A. Was Hulda the Propheteſs deceived herſelf? or did ſhe deceive King Joſiah? when ſhe aſſures that good King from the Lord, that he ſhould be gathered to his Grave in Peace, and yet ſoon after received a mortal Wound of which he died[h].

B. According to cuſtom he ſtops ſhort in the middle of a Verſe, for the latter Part explains the former, he was to die in Peace, then it follows; *neither ſhall thine Eyes ſee all the Evil that I will bring up-*

[f] Exod. xix. 5. [g] Pſal. xxxix. 31, 32, 33. [h] P. 257.

on

on this Place, and upon the Inhabitants of the ſame[i]. *Joſiah* was taken from the Evil to come, and in that Senſe died in Peace, and we doubt not but he died in Peace with God: The Wound he received was the Effect of his own Raſhneſs, and had no Relation to that Evil God had threatned to bring upon *Jeruſalem*.

A. Did the Prophet Eliſha deceive Benhadad King of Syria, when he ſaid, thou mayſt certainly recover, howbeit the Lord hath ſhewed me, that he ſhall ſurely die? And did this look the more ungrateful in the Prophet, becauſe he had received forty Camels Loads of the good Things of Damaſcus to tell the King the Truth[k]*?*

B. The Diſtemper was not in itſelf mortal, for the King of *Syria* did not die of it, *but Hazael the next Day took a thick Cloth, and dipp'd it in Water, and ſpread it on his Face, ſo that he died*[l]. Had *Benhadad* had fair Play for his Life, he might have recovered, tho' the Lord had made known to *Eliſha* what the Event wou'd be, *the Lord hath ſhewed me that he ſhall ſurely die.* Some Criticks obſerve that the *Hebrew* Word * Lo may be tranſlated an Adverb NOT *thou ſhalt not recover*, or a Pronoun TO HIM, *ſay to him.*

[i] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 28. [k] Ibidem. [l] 2 Kings viii. 15.

* לא

And tho' our Author obſerves, Hazael had been anointed King of Syria by the Prophet Elijah, yet *Benhadad* might have lived out his Time, and *Hazael* after that might ſucceed him, as *David* ſucceeded *Saul* in the Kingdom of *Iſrael,* many Years after he was anointed. Some think the Prophet did not receive this Preſent.

A. Were the four hundred Prophets deceived at once, true or falſe Prophets? And can we call them Innocents, that were deſtroyed by their means[m]*?*

B. Micaiah tells King Ahab, the Lord hath put a lying Spirit in the Mouth of theſe thy Prophets, and the Lord hath ſpoken Evil concerning thee[n]. They are called HIS PROPHETS, and elſewhere, *the Prophets of Baal*[o], and they were LYING PROPHETS. That unhappy Prince was devoted to Deſtruction for his Wickedneſs, and therefore God in righteous Judgment permitted a lying Spirit to deceive his Prophets, according to that known Obſervation, *Jupiter quos perdere vult, hos dementat.* I can't think them innocent, that were deſtroyed by their means, for there were ſad Corruptions in *Iſrael* at that Time; *they have forſaken thy Covenant* (as *Elijah* repreſents it) *thrown down thine*

[m] P. 257, 258, xviii. 22, 40.

[n] 2 Chron. xviii, 22.

[o] 1 Kings

Altars,

Altars, and ſlain thy Prophets with the Sword; and I, even I only am left, and they ſeek my Life, to take it away[p]. If a People in Covenant with God are innocent, when they forſake that Covenant, and fall into Idolatry, and are guilty of ſhedding Blood, the Blood of Prophets, if Perſons guilty of ſuch abominable Crimes may be deemed innocent, who then can be guilty? Or *is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance* on a Covenant People, guilty of ſo many and great Iniquities? I will cloſe this Chapter with what God told the *Jews* by the Prophet *Amos*, which illuſtrates and confirms what I have juſt now aſſerted, YOU ONLY HAVE I KNOWN OF ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH, THEREFORE I WILL PUNISH YOU FOR ALL YOUR INIQUITIES[q].

[p] 1 Kings xix. 14. [q] Ch. iii. 2.

CHAP. III.

Some Paſſages, particularly Prophecies of the New Teſtament vindicated from the miſtaken Senſe put on them by this Writer.

A. *DO the beſt Interpreters and Commentators own that the Apoſtles were groſſly miſtaken as to the ſecond coming of Chriſt, and the End of the World*[a]*?*

B. Grotius, whom our Author refers to in his Margin, ſeems to think, the Apoſtles expected Chriſt's coming in that Age; but I am fully perſuaded, that Learned Man was in this reſpect very much miſtaken, and as far as I am able to judge the beſt Interpreters and Commentators are of another Opinion.

None of the Texts, this Gentleman hath produced, do prove, *That the Apoſtles thought that thoſe Times they wrote in were* Tempora noviſſima, *and that the then Age was the laſt Age, and thoſe Days the laſt Days*[b].

[a] P. 258, 259. [b] Ibid.

That

That St. *Paul* (out of whoſe Epiſtles this Writer hath given us three Paſſages) expected to dye, and to be raiſed up at the laſt, is very evident from theſe Words, *Knowing that he which raiſed up the Lord Jeſus*, ſhall RAISE UP US *alſo by Jeſus, and ſhall preſent* US *with you*[c]. *If by any means I might attain unto the Reſurrection of the Dead*[d]. And in the laſt Epiſtle he wrote, we have theſe remarkable Expreſſions, *I am now ready to be offer'd, and the time of my Departure is at hand*[e]. And he beſeecheth the Theſſalonian Chriſtians, *that they be not ſhaken in Mind or be troubled—as that* THE DAY OF THE LORD IS AT HAND. *Let no Man deceive you by any Means*, FOR THAT DAY SHALL NOT COME, *except there come a falling away firſt*, &c[f]. This Gentleman therefore is certainly much out, when he ſays, *I think, 'tis plain*, Paul *himſelf expected to be alive at the coming of the Lord, and that he had the Word of God for it*[g].

The Jews according to the Tradition of Elias, *divide the duration of the World into three Ages, the Age before the Law, the Age of the Law, and that Age after the Law, or that of the* Meſſiah, Talmud. *in*

[c] 2 Cor. iv. 14. [d] Phil. iii. 11. [e] 2 Tim. iv. 6.
[f] 2 Theſſ. ii. 3, &c. [g] Ibid.

Sannedr.

Sanhedr. Cap. Chelek [h]. And thus we may underſtand that Place,——*Upon whom the ends of the World are come*, τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων, *the ends of the Ages, not* τὰ τέλη τȣ̃ κόσμȣ *the ends of the World.* Αιων (*Age*) *in the Scripture very ordinarily is the Jewiſh Age: in which Senſe Circumciſion, the Paſſover, and other* Moſaic *Rites are ſaid to be* לעולם εις αἰῶνα *for an Age. So the Diſciples,* Mat. xxiv. 3. *enquire of Chriſt* περὶ τῆς συντελείας τȣ̃ αἰῶνος, *concerning the end of the Age, and he anſwereth concerning the Deſtruction of Jeruſalem* [i], *Verily I ſay unto you, this Generation ſhall not paſs till all theſe Things be fulfilled,* Mat. xxiv. 34.

So Chriſt IN THE END OF THE WORLD, ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων *in the* END OF THE (Jewiſh) AGES, *hath appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf* [k].

I grant in ſome Places, *by the coming of the Lord being nigh,* I am inclin'd to think, the Apoſtles meant Chriſt's coming to take Vengeance on the Jewiſh Nation by the *Romans,* which was ſo terrible, that it may be look'd on as typical of the Vengeance he will take in the laſt Day, *on them that know not God, and obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

[h] *Whitby* in 1 Cor. x. 11.
[i] *Lightfoot* in loc.
[k] Heb. ix. 26.

And

And as to particular Perſons it is the ſame thing, whether they live to Chriſt's ſecond coming or not, for Death puts an end to their State of Probation and Tryal, ſo that as St. *Auſtin* ſays, *the Day of Death is to us as that Day: for ſuch as a Man is at Death, that he will be at Judgment*, &c[1].

A. But are not the Motives and Arguments to excite People to the Practice of Piety, and all good Works built upon this Suppoſition, that the Apoſtolick Age wou'd be the laſt Age of the World[m]*?*

B. From what hath been obſerved, juſt now, we ſee the Apoſtles did not expect Chriſt's coming to judge the World in that Age, to which I add what St. *Peter* ſays, *Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off this my Tabernacle, even as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſhewed me. Moreover, I will endeavour that you may be able after my Deceaſe, to have theſe Things always in remembrance*[n].

But they ſpeak of it as moſt certain and awful, yet uncertain as to the exact time of it, and conſidering Death is the ſame

[1] *Tunc enim unicuique veniet Dies ille, cum venerit ei Dies ut talis hinc exeat, qualis judicandus eſt illo die. In quo enim quemque invenerit ſuus noviſſimus Dies, in hoc eum comprehendet mundi noviſſimus Dies.*

[m] P. 259. [n] 2 Pet. i. 14, 15.

to particular Perſons with Chriſt's ſecond coming, the Motives and Arguments to Piety and good Works don't loſe their Force. Chriſt's coming to us by Death is often ſudden, and always uncertain, as well as his future coming to Judgment will be, and therefore in both Caſes, *we are to watch* (*for we know not when the Maſter of the Houſe cometh*) &c[o].

A. Did St. *Peter* expect Chriſt's coming to judge the World in his time?

B. Nothing can be plainer that he did not, from the above cited place[p]; and elſewhere he ſays, *There ſhall come in the laſt days Scoffers walking after their own Luſts* (therefore they were not come in his time) *and ſaying, where is the Promiſe of his coming? For ſince the Fathers fell aſleep, all Things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation*[q]. Doth this look as if St. *Peter* expected the Day of Judgment in his own time? eſpecially when he ſays, *Beloved be not ignorant of this one Thing, that one Day is with the Lord as a thouſand Years, and a thouſand Years as one Day*[r]; What are a thouſand Years, if compared with the endleſs Eternity of God? This was alſo an uſual ſaying among the *Jews*[s]. *The Lord is not ſlack*

[o] Mark xiii. 35, 36, 37.
[p] 2 Pet. i. 14, 15.
[q] 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.
[r] Ver. 8.
[s] Poli Syn. in loc.

concerning his Promiſe, (as ſome Men count Slackneſs) but is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance[t].

Mr. Mede ſays, *it was not poſſible, the Apoſtles ſhould expect the end of the World to be in their time, when they knew ſo many things were to come to paſs before it, that could not be fulfilled in a ſhort time; as,* 1. *The Deſolation of Jeruſalem,* Mat. xxiv. *and that not till the ſeventy Weeks were expired.* 2. *The* Jews *to be carried Captives over all Nations,* Luke xxi. 24. *And Jeruſalem to be trodden of the Gentiles, till the Times of the Gentiles ſhould be fulfilled.* 3. *In the mean time the Roman Empire muſt be ruined, and that which hindred taken out of the way,* 2 Theſſ. ii. 7. 4. *After that the Man of Sin ſhou'd be revealed, and domineer his time in the Temple and Church of God,* 2 Theſſ. ii. 8 5. *After all this,* viz. *when the Fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhould come in, that Iſrael ſhou'd be received again to Mercy,* Rom. xi. 25. 6. *That Chriſt ſhould reign in his Church on Earth, ſo long till he had put down all Rule, all Authority and Power, and ſubjected all his Enemies under his Feet, before he ſhou'd ſubdue his laſt Enemy, which is Death,*

[t] 2 Pet. iii. 9.

and ſurrender his Kingdom into the Hands of his Father. 7. That the time ſhould be ſo long, that in the laſt Days ſhould come Scoffers ſaying, where is the Promiſe of his coming? How is it poſſible they ſhould imagine the day of Doom to be ſo near? When all theſe Things muſt firſt come to paſs, and not one of them was yet fulfilled [1].

This Quotation, tho' long, yet (I hope) will not be unacceptable to the Reader; tho' I am not of the learned Author's Opinion about Chriſt's perſonal Reign on Earth for a thouſand Years, yet in this place he expreſſeth himſelf ſo cautiouſly, that all who acknowledge Chriſt King of his Church, muſt agree with him, whether they do believe his perſonal Reign on Earth or not.

[1] P. 665.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Duties Men owe to one another, and the Things either commanded, or approved of in Scripture relating thereto.

A. DOTH not Revelation ſuppoſe Reaſon? Do not the ſacred Writings ſuppoſe Men to be reaſonable Creatures? And that therefore they are to uſe their rational Powers in conſulting them?

B. Doubtleſs, how ſtrange then are our Author's Words? *If Men are not well grounded in the Reaſon and Nature of Things, and from thence judge of their Duty in relation to one another, there are Things either commanded, or approved of in the Scripture, which might be apt to lead Men aſtray*[a], what thoſe things are he afterwards mentions.

A. Doth the Scripture any where commend *Jacob* for cheating his elder Brother, impoſing on his aged Parent, and for obtaining his Bleſſing by a Lie? How then can a Man of common Senſe and Honeſty think this no Crime?

[a] P. 262, 263.

B. The

B. The ſacred Hiſtorian relateth matter of Fact, that *Jacob* did get the Bleſſing in that manner. God had indeed deſigned it for him, but the Methods he took by his Mother's Advice and Command can by no means be juſtified: and *Jacob* afterwards in *Laban*'s deceiving him might read his own former Sin in deceiving his Father.

A. Did the Iſraelites *borrow of the* Egyptians *by the Command of God himſelf, what they were not to repay?*

B. The *Hebrew* word *Shaal* ſignifies to Ask [b], and ſo it is rendred elſewhere, Ask *of me and I will give* [c]. And were not the *Egyptians* in debt to the *Iſraelites* for their hard Service and Bondage? Did they owe their Peace and Proſperity to *Joſeph*, the great Inſtrument Providence raiſed up for their Good? Were not the *Egyptians* willing on any terms to get rid of them, when they found the hand of God ſo heavy on them? *How then ſhould this be a good Precedent for Men to flatter themſelves, that they are true* Iſrealites, *and thoſe of a different Religion mere* Egyptians, *and ſo may ſpoil them under pretence of borrowing of them* [d]? This is repeated again in a great meaſure in *p.* 349. where he repreſents the King of *Egypt* as being impoſed

[b] P. 263. [c] שאל Pſal. ii. 8. [d] P. 263.

upon

upon by the *Iſraelites*, who in demanding to go three Days Journey into the Wilderneſs to ſacrifice, acted by God's Direction.

A. Do we find the Harlot Rahab *celebrated even in the New Teſtament, for lying to the Government, and betraying her Country to its moſt cruel Enemies*[e]*?*

B. She is celebrated by the Apoſtle for receiving the Spies: *By Faith the Harlot* Rahab *periſhed not with them that believed not, when ſhe had received the Spies with Peace*[f]. And St. *James* ſays, *ſhe received the Meſſengers, and ſent them out another way*[g]; but here is not one Word of her lying mentioned, that was her Sin, which the Holy Ghoſt in great Mercy paſſeth over, and taketh Notice only of what was commendable in her, and proved the Truth as well as Greatneſs of her Faith, that ſhe believed God had deſigned *Canaan* for the Children of *Iſrael:* Neither can ſhe be charged with *betraying her Country, for ſhe ſaid unto the Men* (the Spies) *I know that the Lord hath given you the Land, and that your Terror is fallen upon us, and that all the Inhabitants of the Land faint becauſe of you: For we have heard how the Lord dried up the Waters of the Red-Sea*

[e] P. 263. [f] Heb. xi. 31. [g] Jam. ii. 25.

for

for you, when you came out of Egypt, *and what you did unto the two Kings of the* Amorites, *that were on the other Side* Jordan, *&c.* [h]

A. Was it lawful thus to receive Spies againſt her own Country?

B. I Anſwer; ſhe kept a Houſe for Entertainment of all Perſons; theſe were the People of God; her Countrymen were devoted by God himſelf to Deſtruction; ſhe alſo knew that their Land was given by the ſupream Lord (to whom the *Canaanites* had forfeited it) to the *Iſraelites.* The Death of the Spies ſhe had Reaſon to think might exaſperate the *Iſraelites,* and that their Life could not prejudice her Countrymen. She did it in no Treachery or Hatred, nor for any filthy Lucre, or any other by Reſpect: What ſhe did, was by ſpecial Inſtruction and by an extraordinary Spirit [i].

Her officious Lye (ſays another Commentator) *cannot in ſtrict Juſtice be excuſed, tho' in Mercy it may be pardoned. And in the Act and Work of Charity towards them* (the Spies) *ſhe was not guilty of perfidious Treachery to her own Country, which ſhe knew to be wicked, and deſtined by God himſelf unto Deſtruction, and ſhe was bound to love God more than her Coun-*

[h] Joſh. ii. 9, 11.

[i] Dr. *Gouge,* in Heb. xi. 31.

try,

try, and his People more than his Enemies: By Faith she had renounced all to serve the true God, and in her Heart was become already one of God's Saints and Servants [k].

A. What shall we say to *Jael's* killing *Sisera?* which the Objector calls *an Act of the highest Treachery; for which, because it served the Interest of* Israel, *she is declared by the Prophetess* Deborah *to be blessed above Women* [l].

B. It must be confessed, this is not without its Difficulties, and learned Men have taken different Ways to solve it; what follows laid together will, I hope, go a good Way towards easing it. It is said indeed, *there was Peace between* Jabin *King of* Hazor, *and the House of* Heber *the* Kenite [m]; yet I suppose by it we are not obliged to understand more than a Cessation of Acts of Hostility, for the *Israelites* were forbid making a League or Covenant of Friendship with the cursed *Canaanites*, and the *Kenites* were allied to the *Israelites*, and of the same Religion; there being only a TRUCE, either Side was at Liberty to break it, whenever it suited their Interest: Besides *Sisera* was a publick Enemy and Oppressor of God's People, he was now as it were proscribed, and therefore might be

[k] Mr. *Lawson* in Heb. xi. 31. [l] P. 263. [m] Judges iv. 17. [n] Vide Syn. in loc.

ſlain by Any Man. And *Deborah* doth not commend *Jael* for ſaying, *Turn in, my Lord, fear not*, in which the great Strength of the Objection lyeth; but only her ACTION, and that Artifice that he asked Water, and ſhe gave him Milk, which, if impartially examined, will be found to differ but little from that of warlike Stratagems, wherein a Man layeth a Snare for his Enemy, and deceiveth him with Pretences of doing ſomething which he never intendeth.

How doth our Objector know, that *Jael* did intend at firſt to kill *Siſera?* Might not God afterwards, by an extraordinary Impulſe of her Mind, put it into her Heart? And it is not unlikely, becauſe ſhe hath ſo much Courage, to do it calmly and deliberately, in which there appeareth no private Malice, but a Regard to the publick Welfare of the *Iſraelites*, who had been cruelly oppreſſed by *Jabin* his Maſter.

Or what, if we ſhould allow, that tho' *Jael*'s Deſign was good, yet the Means ſhe uſed cannot be juſtified; and that this Song of *Deborah* was not inſpired? *The worſt* (ſays Mr. *Pool*) *that any malicious Mind can infer from the Place is, this Song tho' indited by a good Man or Woman, was not divinely inſpired; but only compoſed by a Perſon piouſly inclined, and tranſported with*

with Joy for the Deliverance of God's People, but ſubject to miſtake; who therefore out of Zeal to commend the happy Inſtrument of ſo great a Deliverance, might eaſily overlook the Indirectneſs of the Means by which it was accompliſhed, and commend that which ſhould have been diſliked. It is true ſhe is call'd *Deborah* the Propheteſs, but we read of no miraculous or extraordinary Action performed by her; therefore probably ſhe was only a Woman of eminent Piety and Prudence, and well acquainted with the Law of *Moſes*, by which ſhe was ſingularly qualified for acting the Part of a Judge in *Iſrael*. Beſides I beg Leave to add, that admitting her to be an inſpired Propheteſs, yet every Expreſſion dropping from ſuch a Perſon was not divinely inſpired; for Inſtance, *Samuel* the Prophet was miſtaken about *Eliab*, ſaying, *Surely the Lord's Anointed is before him* [o], which the Lord immediately corrected. So *Nathan* ſaid to *David*, *Go, do all that is in thine Heart, for the Lord is with thee* [p]. And yet the Night after the Word of the Lord came to *Nathan* to forbid *David* building an Houſe to the Name of the Lord.

And are extraordinary Inſtances, eſpecially thoſe that are doubtful and difficult,

[o] 1 Sam. xvi. 6. [p] 2 Sam. vii. 1.

proper for us to copy after? ſince it is certain we muſt act by Rules of Reaſon and Revelation, and not imitate the beſt in their extraordinary Actions, or in all the common Actions of their Lives, in ſome of which they were *Men ſubject to like Paſſions with others.*

A. What Prince (ſays our Queriſt) *can ever want a Pretence of going to War, and totally extirpating thoſe he invades, when he ſees,* Saul *was commanded by God to deſtroy the* Amalekites, *Men and Women, Infants and Sucklings, Ox and Sheep, Camel and Aſs, for an Injury done four hundred Years before*[q]?

B. Amaleck (we are told) *came and fought with* Iſrael *in* Rephidim[r], fought treacherouſly[s]. They were the firſt that attacked *Iſrael* without the leaſt Provocation, which was encouraging others to do the like, and they did this after they had heard what Wonders God had wrought for that People in *Egypt*, and at the *Red-ſea*, which outbraved God himſelf; and it was barbarous and inhuman, inſtead of that Pity, which even Nature prompted them to afford, to add Affliction to the Afflicted: It was alſo horrid Impiety, to fight againſt God himſelf, and to lift up their Hand in a manner againſt the Lord's Throne, as ſome tranſlate

[q] P. 263. [r] Exod. xvii. 2. [s] Alnſw. in loc.

thoſe

thoſe Words, *Exod.* xvii. 16. While they ſtrike at that People whom God had brought forth with an high Hand, and an outſtretched Arm. *Remember* (ſays God) *what* Amalek *did to thee by the Way, when ye were come forth out of* Egypt, *how he met thee by the Way, and ſmote the hindmoſt of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou waſt faint and weary, and he feared not God* [t]. This God ſo highly reſented, *that the Lord ſaid unto* Moſes, *Write this for a Memorial in a Book, and rehearſe it in the Ears of* Joſhua; *for I will utterly put out the remembrance of* Amalek *from under Heaven* [u].

I would ask this Objector, is not God the Lord of Life and Death? Had not the *Amalekites* forfeited their Lives, and might not God take them away, when and by what Means he pleaſed? And if he forbore them four hundred Years, and inſtead of repenting they grow worſe, *is the Lord unrighteous, who taketh Vengeance?* Might God have taken Vengeance in that Age? Did his Forbearance ſo long deprive him of the Right to puniſh? And as to the Infants and Sucklings, did God take away any more than he had given them? Or cannot he in a future State of Exiſtence reward

[t] Deut. xxv. 18. [u] Exod. xvii. 14.

thoſe,

thoſe, whoſe Lives are taken away in a common Calamity for no Sins of their own? Among Men Children often ſuffer with and for their Parents Crimes, as particularly in Caſes of High-Treaſon. I will add no more but this, for a full Anſwer to the Objection, I grant when any other Prince hath as expreſs Orders from God, to deſtroy an ancient Enemy, as King *Saul* had, he may not only warrantably obey them, but it would be his Sin not to obey them.

A. Was it unjuſt in God *to reject* Saul *from being King, for ſparing* Agag *and preſerving ſome of the Cattle for Sacrifice*[x]*?*

B. Diſobedience to a plain, expreſs Command of God, is not ſo ſmall a Crime as this Author ſeems to think. *Saul*'s Sin was a Complication of many Sins. There was Covetouſneſs in it; *for he and the People ſpared the beſt of the Sheep, and of the Oxen, and of the Fatlings, and the Lambs, and all that was good, and would not deſtroy them, but every Thing that was vile and refuſe, that they deſtroyed utterly*[y]. There was alſo ſomewhat of Pride; for he ſpared *Agag* the King of *Amalek*, probably to grace his Triumph, for *it was told* Samuel, *ſaying*, Saul *came to* Carmel,

[x] P. 264. [y] 1 Sam. xv. 9.

and

and behold, HE SET HIM UP A PLACE, *and is gone about, and paſſed on, and gone down to* Gilgal [a]. He ſet him up a PLACE or an HAND, which ſome think was ſomewhat like a Triumphal Arch, or Monument of this ſignal Victory. Laſtly, there was Diſobedience in his Sin, *and Rebellion* (againſt God) *is as the Sin of Witchcraft, and Stubbornneſs is as Iniquity and Idolatry* [b]. And ſeeing *Saul* refuſed to be obedient to that God, *by whom Kings reign, and who removeth Kings and ſetteth up Kings,* was there any Injuſtice done him in God's depriving him of that Kingdom, which he had freely given him, and *Saul* had now forfeited? Let it be farther conſider'd, *Saul* was a King *given them in God's Anger, and taken away in his Wrath* [c]. The People would have a King tho' God was their King, which he greatly reſented [d].

A. Was *God's ordering* Samuel *leſt* Saul *ſhould ſuſpect the Deſign, to pretend a Sacrifice, when he ſent him to anoint* David [e], any way inconſiſtent with Truth?

B. That *Samuel* was ſent to *Jeſſe's* Houſe to ſacrifice was true, but not all the Buſineſs he had to do there, and I don't ſee that *Saul* had a Right to know any

[a] 1 Sam. xv. 12. יד Vide Syn. in loc. [b] Ver. 23.
[c] Hoſ. xiii. 11. [d] 1 Sam. viii. tot. [e] P. 264.

thing about the Affair; but I confeſs I don't ſee the Reaſon why our Objector mentions it, nor how it ſtands connected with the former Part of the Paragraph.

A. Is the diſpoſſeſſing of the Canaanites *by the* Iſraelites, *a good Precedent for other Nations* [f]?

B. What the *Iſraelites* did was by God's expreſs Orders, and the *Canaanites* had forfeited their Lives and Country into the Hands of him, *whoſe is the Earth and the Fulneſs thereof*; and who may in ſuch a Caſe, without the leaſt Injuſtice, take from one, and give to another. The Land ſpued out the Inhabitants, and my Antagoniſt had done but Juſtice to the ſacred Hiſtory, if he had taken Notice to his Readers, THAT FOR THE WICKEDNESS OF THOSE NATIONS, DID THE LORD DRIVE THEM OUT BEFORE ISRAEL [g].

The ill Uſe the *Spaniards*, as he ſuppoſeth, made of this Precedent, is no juſt Objection againſt it, becauſe the beſt Things have at ſome Times been abuſed.

A. Was not *Ehud*, one of the Judges, an extraordinary Perſon? And what he did in ſtabbing *Eglon* King of *Moab*, was it not done by an extraordinary Commiſſion?

[f] P. 264. [g] Deut. ix. 5. [h] Jud. iii. 15.

B. He

B. He was one of the Deliverers God raiſed up, in Anſwer to the Cries and Prayers of the Children of Iſrael [i].

But how could this *countenance the* Popiſh *Prieſts in aſſaſſinating the two* Henries *of* France? *Or juſtify our Gunpowder-Plotters here in* England? If I don't miſtake my Objector, his Argument ſtands thus, What an extraordinary Judge of *Iſrael* did by an EXTRAORDINARY COMMISSION, againſt a cruel Oppreſſor, to whom he owed no Allegiance, that an ordinary Perſon without Authority may do to his natural and rightful Sovereign. I leave it to himſelf to determin, whether this Argument is not inconcluſive.

A. Is there no other Reaſon to be aſſigned, for its being ſaid Pſ. cxxxvii. 8, 9. *O Daughter of* Babylon, *happy ſhall he be, that taketh and daſheth thy little Ones againſt the Stones; but becauſe ſhe deſired of the Captives one of the Songs of Zion?* as this Gentleman aſſerts [k].

B. It was inhuman and barbarous in the Daughter of *Babylon* to deſire it; for even an Enemy in Diſtreſs, and when in our Power, is to be pitied, and not trampled on and inſulted; yea it was profane and impious to deſire one of the Temple of Songs,

[i] Jud. iii. 15.

[k] P. 264.

that the *Babylonians* might make a Jeſt of them; no Songs would ſerve them but the SONGS OF ZION, wherewith God had been honoured, as none but the Veſſels of the Temple would ſerve *Belſhazzar* to drink and carouſe in [l]. —But our Author (who ſeldom doth Juſtice to the ſacred Hiſtory) overlooks Part of a Verſe to which he refers in his Margin, and which contains a much greater Reaſon than he aſſigns. The whole Verſe runs thus, *O Daughter of* Babylon, *who art to be deſtroyed*, (*Dr.* Hammond *renders*, *Who art* THE DESTROYER) *happy ſhall he be, that rewardeth thee*, AS THOU HAST SERVED US. And how *Babylon* had ſerved *Jeruſalem*, you read in the Prophet *Jeremy*; Nebuchadnezzar *the King of* Babylon *hath devoured me, he hath made me an empty Veſſel, he hath ſwallowed me up like a Dragon, he hath filled his Belly with my Delicates, he hath caſt me out. The Violence done to me and to my Fleſh, be upon* Babylon, *ſhall the Inhabitant of* Zion *ſay; and my Blood upon the Inhabitants of* Chaldea, *ſhall* Jeruſalem *ſay* [m].

The 137th Pſalm was compoſed probably by one of the Exiles in *Babylon*, towards the End of the ſeventy Years Captivity, and it afforded them ſome Comfort, to foreſee

[l] Dan. v. 2, 3. [m] Jer. li. 34, 35.

the

the Ruine of their implacable Enemies ſo near.

But the falſe Reaſon aſſigned by the Gentleman (who pretends to ſo much Impartiality) was, it may be, to make Way for what follows, which I go on to conſider.

A. The holier Men are repreſented in the Old Teſtament, do they ſeem to be the more cruel, as well as more addicted to curſing [n] *?*

B. He hath ſoftened his Reflection upon the Old Teſtament Saints, by ſaying, THEY SEEM TO BE MORE CRUEL, *&c.* But upon ſerious Enquiry, it will appear (I hope) to be only an Imagination of his own without Foundation; and I am of Opinion, he hath miſtook the Meaning of thoſe Paſſages he produceth.

A. Doth David *in the* 109th Pſalm *plentifully beſtow the bittereſt Curſes on his Enemies* [o] *?*

B. St. *Peter* in the New Teſtament expreſly applies this as well as other Prophecies in the Pſalms to *Judas* [p]. And therefore it may be conſidered as a PROPHECY, what would befall *David*'s grand Enemy, who was a Type of the Traytor; and we ought to diſtinguiſh between a wicked Imprecation proceeding from private Revenge, and a prophetick Curſe, which inſpired

[n] P. 264. [o] P. 264, 265. [p] Acts i. 16, 20.

Prophets denounce againſt great and notorious Sinners [q].

If then we conſider ſuch Paſſages of holy Writ as Prophecies of what Judgments, the publick Enemies of God's People would bring down on themſelves, and that theſe are Prophecies dictated by the Spirit of God, and did not proceed from private Revenge, the Difficulty will be in great Meaſure removed.

A. Did not David *treat the* Ammonites *cruelly, when he took their Cities, cutting the People with Saws, and with Harrows of Iron, and with Axes* [r]?

B. Some are of Opinion, *David* did this before his Repentance of his Sin *in the Matter of* Uriah *and* Bathſhebah, and obſerve that People overcome by Luxury, in ſome Inſtances are cruel [s]. And if this was not at that Time, the Siege of *Rabbah* muſt laſt about twenty Months; for *David* had two Children by *Bathſhebah*, if the Story lieth, as it is placed in the Hiſtory: Therefore probably his ſerving the *Ammonites* in that Manner, was before his Repentance, whilſt his Heart was too much hardned. But others excuſe it, and ſay he was not guilty of Cruelty, becauſe the *Am-*

[q] Vide Poli. Syn. in loc. in 2 Sam. 12 & ult. [r] P. 265. [s] *Sanctius*

monites

monites had violated the Law of Nations, in treating *David*'s Ambaſſadors ill, whom he ſent in a moſt friendly and kind Manner. They had alſo ſlain *Uriah*, and many other brave Soldiers: They had often invaded *Judea*, and had threatned to put out their right Eyes [t]. And ſome think God directed *David* to uſe them in this Manner, to puniſh them for their Ingratitude to *David*: But if any Thing more cruel than ordinary was done, it may be imputed to *Joab*; beſides thoſe ſevere Puniſhments were not inflicted upon all the People, but only on the Ringleaders of that Injury and Affront done to *David* in the Perſon of his Ambaſſadors.

A. What may be offer'd in Vindication of the holy Prophet *Eliſhah*'s Conduct towards the little Children of *Bethel?*

B. Our Objector hath not fairly repreſented this Hiſtory; for it is expreſly mentioned, *they ſaid to him, Go up thou Baldhead* [u], which probably was a Banter upon his Maſter *Elijah*'s Aſſumption into Heaven, do thou go up after him: Theſe Children were guilty of a double Sin, in reproaching the living Prophet for his Baldneſs, (whereas natural Defects and Infirmities ſhould never be ridiculed) and at the ſame

[t] 1 Sam. xi. [u] 2 King. ii. 23.

Time

Time reflected on the tranſlated Prophet, and conſequently upon the God of both; as *Moſes* told the *Iſraelites*, *Your Murmurings are not againſt us, but againſt the Lord* [x]. And God ſaid to *Samuel*, *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I ſhould not reign over them* [y]. And Chriſt ſays, *He that deſpiſeth you* (my Apoſtles) *deſpiſeth me*: *Peter* alſo ſaid to *Ananias*, *Thou haſt not lied unto Men, but unto God.* So the Prophet might have ſaid to thoſe wicked Children of *Bethel*, You do not mock me, but God himſelf, whoſe Prophet I am :. Furthermore *Bethel* was the Place, where *Jeroboam* the Son of *Nebat* had ſet up one of his golden Calves, and *Eliſha* was not a welcome Gueſt in that idolatrous City; becauſe he and his Maſter were great Reformers in their Days. Theſe Children, we may fear, had been taught by their idolatrous Parents and Neighbours, to deſpiſe and mock the Prophets of the Lord; *and mocking the Meſſengers of the Lord, and miſuſing his Prophets, was one of the crying Sins, which brought Deſtruction upon the* Jews [z]. The Parents alſo were puniſhed in the ſudden and awful Death of their Children.

[x] Exod. xvi. 8. [y] 1 Sam. viii. 7. [z] 2 Chr. xxxvi. 16.

It

It ought alſo to be conſidered, the Hiſtory ſays (tho' our Author omits it) the Prophet TURNED BACK AND LOOKED ON THEM [a]. He heard their Taunts a good while with Patience, and looked back on them, to look them into Fear, Shame and Remorſe; he looked with great Pity and Compaſſion on them, that Children ſhould ſo ſoon ſpeak the Language of Hell; but when they proceeded in their Wickedneſs, the Fire of holy Zeal for God's Honour was kindled in his Breaſt by the Continuance of their Provocation; but ſeeing no Hopes of their Repentance and Reformation (for none of them did ſo much as bluſh) *therefore* HE CURSED THEM IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, *i. e.* BY HIS AUTHORITY: And had he curſed them from a Principle of private Revenge, God would not have ſaid *Amen* to it, and armed two She-bears with Vengeance, ſo that forty two of them were inſtantly devour'd: By the Number that were deſtroyed, we may ſuppoſe there were more, who might run away, ſo that there was a MOB rais'd againſt the Prophet; and what he did, I make no Queſtion, was by AUTHORITY FROM GOD, and IT MAY BE IN HIS OWN NECESSARY DEFENCE; and it was no greater Puniſh-

[a] 2 Kings ii. 25.

ment

ment than their own and their Parents Sins deſerved.

As *Ananias* and *Sapphira* were ſtruck Dead by St. *Peter*, and *Elymas* the Sorcerer by St. *Paul*, without any Malice or Revenge in their Hearts; ſo theſe Children were ſlain according to *Eliſha*'s Righteous Imprecation, without any Malice or Revenge in his Heart. This being an extraordinary Judgment, what he did as a Prophet can be no Precedent for us, who are not able to work Miracles as he did.

A. Is the ſame Prophet to be blamed for intailing the Curſe on his Man Gehazi, *and his Seed for evermore, for accepting, without his Maſter's Knowledge, a ſmall Preſent from* Naaman *the* Syrian [b]?

B. Gehazi's Sin was complicated, *the Love of Money, which is the Root of all Evil*, was at the bottom of it. Beſides he blamed his Maſter as guilty of Folly, in refuſing what *Naaman* had offered, to which he adds a PROFANE OATH, *As the Lord liveth*; and he abuſeth, and baſely miſrepreſents his Maſter to *Naaman*, as if he had ſoon repented of his Generoſity, and was a fickle Man: he alſo told *Naaman* one falſe Story, and when he came back, he told

[b] P. 265.

his

his Maſter another: And this might have prejudic'd a new Convert againſt the *Jewiſh* Religion: He might have been ready to ſay as St. *Paul*'s Enemies did concerning him [a]; *Tho'* Eliſha *himſelf did not burden me, yet being crafty he caught me with Guile*, ſending thoſe after me, that made a Gain of me. But if *Gehazi* will have ſome of *Naaman*'s Wealth in this mean, wicked way, he ſhall have his Diſeaſe for his Puniſhment, *tranſit cum onere*; and inſtead of intailing Lands upon his Poſterity, he intail upon them a Leproſy, which might continue only to the third or fourth Generation, as God threatneth.

A. Was there no difference between Gehazi's *taking this Preſent, and the Prophet's taking afterwards forty Camel Loads of the good Things of* Damaſcus? 2 Kings viii. 9 [b].

B. Did the Prophet at firſt refuſe this Preſent? Tho' he wou'd not accept a Preſent from a Subject, might he not accept it from *Benhadad* the King? Did he uſe unjuſtifiable Methods as *Gehazi* did? That the Prophet did *not deceive him*, I ſhowed before [c]: but it is too evident to be denied, that this Writer is willing to catch at every

[a] 2 Cor. xii. 16, 17. [b] P. 265.
[c] P. 43. of this Second Part.

thing, that may reflect Diſhonour on the ſacred Writings.

A. Was Elijah's *cauſing Fire to come down from Heaven, to deſtroy two Captains with their Companies, cruel*[c] ?

B. My Objector aſſerts, *it was for no other Fault, but bluntly delivering a Meſſage from the King, and perhaps in the very Words they were commanded:* but that is more than he is able to prove, as will be paſt doubt, when the Hiſtory is conſidered with all its Circumſtances. It ſeems *Ahaziah*, King of *Iſrael* being ſick, inſtead of conſulting the God of *Iſrael*, ſends Meſſengers to *Baal-zebub* the God of *Ekron*: *But the Angel of the Lord ſaid to* Elijah *the* Tiſhbite, *Ariſe, go up to meet the Meſſengers of the King of* Samaria, *and ſay unto them, Is it not becauſe there is not a God in* Iſrael, *that ye go to enquire of* Baal-zebub *the God of* Ekron? *Now therefore thus the ſaith Lord, Thou ſhalt not come down from that Bed, on which thou art gone up, but ſhalt ſurely die*[d]. On the return of the Meſſengers, and the Deſcription they gave of this Man, who met them, the King concluded it was *Elijah* the *Tiſhbite, and ſent to him a Captain of fifty with his fifty, ſaying, Thou Man of God, the King hath ſaid, Come down*[e].

[c] P. 265. [d] 2 Kings i. 3, 4. [e] Ver. 9.

Is

Is this Gentleman ſure the King might not by the Advice of his Mother *Jezebel*, ſend for the Prophet to put him to Death? Or to oblige him to pray for his Life? Or can we queſtion whether the Anſwer ſent by *Elijah* did not incenſe and provoke the King? However it was, to this rude and inſolent Demand, ſent to *Elijah* an eminent Prophet, who had proved his Miſſion by many undeniable Miracles, he replies, *If I am a Man of God*, as thou ſayeſt, and it may be it was ſpoken in a way of Ridicule, let it appear I am ſo, *by Fire coming down from Heaven, and conſuming thee and thy fifty*, which accordingly came to paſs[f]. Why might not the Prophet know, that the Captain and his Soldiers were Idolaters, and Mockers of God and his Prophets like their King? Have we not Reaſon to fear they were Patrons of *Baal*, and therefore deſerved to die? *Elijah* did not do this of himſelf, but from the Spirit of the Lord. It was a Miracle of Vengeance, to convince that wicked King of the Truth of that Prediction, he had ſent by his Meſſengers[g]. This was ſomewhat very extraordinary, and therefore not to be imitated by any in our Time.

[f] Ver. 10. [g] Ver. 4.

A. Why then did Chriſt blame two of his Diſciples who wou'd have imitated this Action of Elijah's [h]?

B. The two Diſciples were moved with Human Anger, and not by Divine Impulſe: *Elijah* was ſent to inflict Judgments on impenitent Sinners, whereas the Apoſtles were ſent to preach the glad Tidings of Peace and Salvation, to heal and help, and not to deſtroy Mens Lives; *Movebantur* (ſays Eſtius) *illi magis privato vindicandi ſtudio, quàm zelo juſtitiæ.*

A. Was Elijah *more cruel in hindring it from raining upon the Earth, for the ſpace of three Years and ſix Months* [i]?

B. There was no Cruelty in either caſe, for this Drought or Famine was inflicted on *Ahab* and his People for their Cruelty in ſlaying God's Prophets, as well as Idolatry. Was it unjuſt in God to viſit them in this Manner? Why might not *Elijah* foretell it? Or as an eminent Prophet and Reformer why might he not pray for it, as a means to reform and amend them? Afterwards when it had produced the effect in part, he prayed again that the Judgment might be removed; this was granted after they had confeſs'd, that the Lord he is God, and had ſlain the Prieſts of *Baal*, and re-

[h] P. 268. [i] P. 265.

turned

turned to the Worſhip of the true God[k]. From hence *Ahab* and his idolatrous Subjects might learn, that not *Baal*, but the God of *Iſrael*, could give or withhold Rain from the Earth, *For can any of the Vanities of the Nation give Rain?* And this was to awaken King and People out of their wretched Security.

A. Can we vindicate St. James, *who from hence takes occaſion to commend the Efficacy of Prayer*[l]*?*

B. This Apoſtle in the place referr'd to, is treating of that extraordinary and miraculous Method of Healing the Sick by Prayer and Anointing with Oil, and then adds, *Confeſs your Faults one to another that ye may be healed*[m]. He doth not recommend the Example of *Elias* to pray for Vengeance, but for healing Mercy, and pardoning Grace, to obtain Health for the Body, and Remiſſion for the Soul, *for the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much*, Δέησις ἐνεργέμενη the inſpired Prayer[n]: As they who were acted by an evil Spirit were ſtiled ἐνεργέμενοι, ſo they that were acted by the Holy Spirit, and inwardly moved by his Impulſes, were alſo ἐνεργέμενοι in the good Senſe; and therefore it ſeems moſt proper to apply theſe Words,

[k] 1 Kings xviii. and 37.——the End. [l] P. 265.
[m] Jam. v. 16. [n] Dr. *Whitby* in loc.

not

not to every righteous Perſon, but to the Prayer offered up by ſuch an extraordinary Impulſe, not only from the Force of this Expreſſion, but alſo from the ſame thing here mentioned, as the Subject of this Prayer, that our ſick Brother may be healed, which was to be done by the Prayer of Faith; and laſtly from the Example of *Elias*, for his Prayer was the Prayer of Faith, in the Senſe now mentioned; for he abſolutely foretold and confirmed it with an Oath, that there ſhou'd be no Rain theſe Years, but according to his Word, 1 *Kings* xvii. 1. and his Prayer for Rain was upon God's Promiſe to ſend Rain on the Earth.

It is true the Apoſtle mentions both Caſes, *Elijah*'s Praying, that it might not rain, and afterwards that it might rain, that he might give us the Hiſtory compleat; but if we conſider the Context, we ſhall ſee he only recommends Prayer for healing Mercy, and this ſome think was to be done principally in extraordinary Caſes, and when Chriſtians uſed to be under extraordinary Impulſes.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Some Places of Scripture relating to God's Conduct on particular Occaſions conſidered.

A. DOTH *God never puniſh one Man for the Crime of another, the Innocent for the Guilty*[a]*?*

B. This Writer ſeems to imagine, that ſome Men in our World are innocent before God, which will not be granted him. And as Men are united together in civil Society, it is impoſſible but good and bad Men in publick Mercies or Calamities will have their Share, unleſs God was to interpoſe miraculouſly.

A. Was God's cauſing in the latter end of David's *Reign a Famine for three Years together, for the Crime of* Saul *and his bloody Houſe, in ſlaying the* Gibeonites, *breaking in upon the common Courſe of Nature, and the ordinary Rules of his Providence*[b]*?*

B. The true Queſtion ought to be, was it a Crime in *Saul* and his bloody Houſe to cut off the *Gibeonites*, after *Joſhua* and

[a] P. 265. [b] P. 266.

the

the Elders of *Iſrael* had ſworn unto them by the Lord, that they ſhould live? If then *Saul* and his Houſe were guilty both of wilful Murder and Perjury, might not God puniſh them for it? Might he not then take his own Time for doing it? *Nullum tempus occurrit Deo.* Is Forbearance of Puniſhment a Diſcharge? And don't Subjects often ſmart for the Sins and Follies of their Governors? *Delirant Reges, plectuntur Achivi.* Is it not likely many of the People were aiding and aſſiſting the King and his Houſe in this bloody Execution? which ſome think was done in Abhorrence of the Prieſts, for the *Gibeonites* were the Nethinims appointed to attend upon the Prieſts, *as Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water for the Congregation.*

A. Was God's ſmiting Iſrael, *and deſtroying ſeventy thouſand for* David's *Fault, in cauſing the innocent Sheep, as he juſtly calls them, to be number'd, of the like nature* [c]*?*

B. Tho' *Iſrael* was innocent in this particular, yet why might not God take Occaſion from *David*'s Sin in numbering the People, to puniſh them for their own Sins in other Inſtances? It is very plain they were very forward to ſide with *Abſalom,*

[c] P. 266.

and

and afterwards with *Sheba* againſt *David*, who notwithſtanding his Failings in private Life, was an excellent Man, a great Prophet, and a good King: For it is ſaid THE ANGER OF THE LORD WAS KINDLED AGAINST ISRAEL[d]. Probably after the Famine was over, upon the Return of Plenty, they grew wanton and diſſolute in their Manners.

But why ſhould my Objector aſſert? *In one Place it is ſaid, God moved* David *to number* Iſrael. *In another Satan provoked* David, and then ask, *Did God conſpire with Satan in this Act, in order to deſtroy a Number of innocent Perſons*[e]? In the Book of *Chronicles* it is ſaid, *Satan ſtood up againſt* Iſrael, *and provoked* David *to number* Iſrael[f]. And in the other Place it is ſaid, *he moved* David *againſt them*[g]. The ſame *Hebrew* Word is uſed in both Places, tho' we tranſlate it *provoke* in the former, and MOVE in the latter. Satan it ſeems made uſe of *David*'s Pride and Covetouſneſs, to number the People, that he might lay a Tax upon them, whereas they were never numbered but by expreſs Command of God, or on great Neceſſity in caſe of a War; and there doth not appear the leaſt Occaſion for it at this Time, and God took

[d] 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. [e] P. 266. [f] 1 Chron. xxi. 1.
[g] 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

Vengeance not only for this but for their other Sins. Certainly God's Ends were holy, wiſe and righteous in it, whatever Satan's were. *Joab* (ſays Dr. *Lightfoot*) *hath here more Piety, at the leaſt more Policy than* David, *for he objected againſt the Command, why doth my Lord require this Thing? why will he be a Cauſe of Treſpaſs to* Iſrael? And ſome are of Opinion, that one Cauſe of the Plague upon the People was, their not paying the half Shekel, as God commanded, whenever they were number'd [h].

A. Our Author objects, the Numbers do not agree; in *Samuel* it is ſaid, all *Iſrael* were only eight hundred thouſand, but in *Chronicles*, they are reckoned eleven hundred thouſand, here are three hundred thouſand difference; and the Book of *Samuel* ſays, the Men of *Judah* were five hundred thouſand, but the Book of *Chronicles*, they were only four hundred and ſeventy thouſand. *How can we reconcile this Story with itſelf* [i]?

B. To reconcile this Difference, Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves there were four and twenty thouſand Soldiers and Officers that attended *David* monthly, ſo many every Month, theſe make up two hundred eighty

[h] Exod. xxx. 12, 13. [i] P. 266.

and

and eight thouſand, 1 *Chron.* xxvii. And over theſe were twelve Captains, each with their thouſand, which added to the former makes up three hundred thouſand, and ſo the whole was eleven hundred thouſand: Theſe were a ſort of ſtanding Army about the King every Month, and ready for any ſudden Expedition: Theſe being already liſted, and in the conſtant Service and Employment of the King were not number'd, becauſe he wou'd not lay Taxes on his own Servants. The Men of *Judah* were number'd five hundred thouſand, but the choice Men were no more than four hundred and ſeventy thouſand. *Judah* and *Benjamin* were not number'd, for before *Joab* came home to ſum them (for he began fartheſt off firſt) a Plague begun among the People, and conſidering *Joab*'s Backwardneſs to this Work, and conſequently his Careleſſneſs about it, no wonder the Accounts ſhould differ.

A. Is it morally impoſſible, if the Numbers in Saul's *Time were rightly calculated, that either Account ſhould be true*[k]*?*

B. It is rather a Wonder, that in ſo ſhort a time three hundred thouſand could be got together; but doth it follow, there were no more fighting Men in *Iſrael* at that

[k] P. 266.

Time? The *Septuagint* publiſhed by Authority of Pope *Sixtus* mention ſix hundred thouſand Men, and the Men of *Judah* ſeventy thouſand.

A. Is there ſcarce a Chapter in the Old Teſtament, which gives any Hiſtorical Account of Matters of Fact, but there are ſome Things in it, which could not be there originally[l]*?*

B. Dean *Prideaux*, whom our Author quoteth in the Margin, for Proof of his bold Aſſertion, only ſays, *that* Ezra *added in ſeveral Places, throughout the Books of his Edition, what appeared neceſſary for the illuſtrating, connecting or compleating them*, WHEREIN HE WAS ASSISTED BY THE SAME SPIRIT BY WHICH THEY WERE AT FIRST WROTE[m].

But inſtead of ſaying as this Gentleman doth, OF ALMOST EVERY CHAPTER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, the learned Dean mentions about ſix Places in the *Pentateuch*, and one in the Book of *Proverbs*, which he thinks were added by *Ezra* ASSISTED BY THE SAME SPIRIT, BY WHICH THE BOOKS AT FIRST WERE WROTE. But I am of the Opinion, theſe Places ſuppoſed to be interpolated, added or altered, may be accounted for ſome other Way, except the laſt

[l] P. 267.

[m] See his Comment on Part I. Book 5. p. 342.

Chapter

Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, which the *Jews* ſay was wrote by *Joſhua* under the Influence of a prophetick Spirit.

Moſt of theſe Paſſages, my Tutor, the late Learned and Reverend Mr. *William Lorimer*, hath long ſince ſhewn might be inſerted by *Moſes* himſelf[n].

I think his Reaſons are very good and ſolid, as will appear to them, who will read impartially what he hath offered; indeed the whole is worth any one's Peruſal, *the firſt Part being a Tranſlation of an excellent Diſcourſe, proving the Divine Original and Authority of the Five Books of* Moſes, *written originally in* French, *by* (as Mr. *Lorimer* conjectures) *Monſieur* du Bois de la Cour, *and approved by ſix Doctors of the* Sorbon.

But admitting theſe few Paſſages were Interpolations and Additions, they are ſo few, and ſo little affect the Truth of the Hiſtory, and being made by *Ezra*, who had the Spirit of God, I can't ſee any mighty Advantage this Writer, or any other Caviller at Revelation, can make of it.

A. I am glad to find, *He owns, that the ſame Spirit (which he dares not call a Spirit*

[n] See his Examination of a conſiderable part of *F. Simons's Critical Hiſtory of the* Old Teſtament, *p.* 131, 139, 145, 147, 151, 157, 161, printed in the Year 1682.

of

of Cruelty) *does not alike prevail throughout the Old Teſtament, and that the nearer we come to the Times of the Goſpel, the milder it appeared*; yet doth he not miſrepreſent the ſecond Command, by leaving out a Clauſe, which undoubtedly is a part of it [o]?

B. Had he mentioned the whole Verſe as it lieth in *Exodus* xx. it wou'd appear, *That God viſiteth the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate him* [p]. If then the Children of wicked Parents don't partake with them in their Sins, but repent of the Wickedneſs of their Parents, and turn from it, then and in that caſe God doth not and will not viſit them in a way of Wrath, as is afterwards explained by *Ezekiel, the Soul that ſinneth, it ſhall dye, the Son ſhall not bear the Iniquity of the Father.*

A. Accordingly (*he ſays*) Achan *with all his Family, was deſtroy'd for his ſingle Crime* [q].

B. Some think only *Achan* was ſtoned, and that his Sons and Daughters were brought forth with their Father, not to be puniſhed, SED TERRORIS CAUSA. *Grotius* is of Opinion, it may be ſo underſtood, for it

[o] P. 268. [p] Exodus xx. 5. [q] Ibid.

follows,

follows, *they ſtoned* HIM, *not* THEM[r]. Or ſuppoſing his Sons and Daughters ſuffered with him, is this Writer ſure they were not concerned as Acceſſaries with him in committing the Crime? for the accurſed Things were hid in the ſame Tent, and therefore they cou'd not be ignorant of it, and probably they were grown up, becauſe *Achan* was but in the fifth Deſcent from *Judah*, and conſequently was advanced in Years. But ſhou'd we allow this was an extraordinary Caſe, and as God is the Lord of Life and Death, ſo on this occaſion, to terrify the *Iſraelites* at their firſt Entrance on the promiſed Land, and to teach them ſtrict Obedience to every Divine Command, he took this exemplary Vengeance? From the Hiſtory it appears to be a great Crime, for it was committed againſt an expreſs Law[s], and being the firſt Crime, it was very fit it ſhou'd not paſs unpuniſhed.

A. Are we, in ordinary Caſes, to imitate the extraordinary Actions of Elijah, *and other Holy Men, tho' cited with Approbation in the New Teſtament*[t]*?*

B. Moſt certainly we are not. But I think he is miſtaken, in ſaying, *Moſes acted the part of a Magiſtrate, when a private Man, in deſtroying his fellow Subject*;

[r] Joſhua vii. 25. [s] Joſhua vi. 18. [t] P. 268, 269.

for

for the next Verſe, to that he quotes in his Margin, contradicts his Aſſertion, *he* (Moſes) *ſuppoſed his Brethren wou'd have known, that God by his Hand wou'd deliver them, but they underſtood not* [v]. May we not hence conclude, that *Moſes* himſelf was fully ſatisfied, that God by his Hand wou'd deliver them, *and as it came into his Heart* (from God) *to viſit his Brethren*, ſo he ſlew the *Egyptian* by an extraordinary Impulſe from God [x]; *&c. Maimonides* makes this Action one degree of Prophecy.

A. Is there a Contraſt between the Spirit of the Old, and the Spirit of the New Teſtament, as to oblige us Chriſtians to ſtick to the latter [y]?

B. Excepting extraordinary Actions in the Old Teſtament, and ſome ſuch we meet with in the New, I don't ſee this Contraſt he ſpeaks of, for the ſtanding Rules of Duty are the ſame in both; *Thou ſhalt not avenge, nor bear any Grudge againſt the Children of thy People, but thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf* [z]. *And if thine Enemy be hungry, give him Bread to eat, and if he be thirſty, give him Water to drink, for thou ſhalt heap Coals of Fire upon his Head, and the Lord ſhall reward thee* [a]. *Rejoice not when thine Enemy falleth, and*

[v] Acts vii. 25. [x] Dr. *Whitby* in loc. [y] P. 269.
[z] Lev. xix. 18. [a] Prov. xxv. 21, 22.

let

let not thine Heart be glad when he ſtumbleth, leſt the Lord ſee it, and it diſpleaſe him, and he turn his Wrath from him [b]. True Religion among the *Jews* conſiſted in DOING JUSTLY, LOVING MERCY, AND WALKING HUMBLY WITH GOD, or in Love to God and our Neighbour, more than in whole Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices, as the *Scribe* told Chriſt [c].

The *Scribes*, and *Phariſees* had indeed greatly corrupted the Law with their falſe Gloſſes, becauſe the Law ſaid, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour*; from thence they taught the People to conclude, they were to hate their Enemies, BUT FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS NOT SO.

The new Command Chriſt teacheth us under the Goſpel *to love one another*, is in reality the old Command revived, and enforced by a new Example; *a new Command I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you alſo love one another* [d]. *Brethren* (ſays the beloved Diſciple) *I write no new Commandment unto you, but an old Commandment, which you had from the beginning, the old Commandment is the Word, which you have heard from the Beginning* [e]. And he aſſures the elect Lady, that he did not write

[b] Prov. xxiv. 17, 18. [c] Mar. xii. 32, 33. [d] John xiii. 34. [e] 1 John ii. 7.

a new Commandment, *but that which we had* FROM THE BEGINNING, THAT WE SHOU'D LOVE ONE ANOTHER[f].

A. That weak or wicked Men have thought, that Chriſtians ſince they had Power in their Hands were to be governed by old Teſtament Precedents, and not by new Teſtament Rules, which require doing good even to the *Gentiles*, cannot be denied.

B. But in the Method before mentioned, the Old and New Teſtament are eaſily reconciled, becauſe the ſtanding Precepts are and muſt be the ſame. I can't find any Thing in the Old or New Teſtament that will juſtify the Orthodox, in murdering their Prince or Fellow Subjects, on the account of his or their *Arianiſm*, or indeed downright and profeſſed Idolatry.

Lucifer Calaritanus's Behaviour towards the Emperour *Conſtantius* was highly Criminal, for *Du Pin* ſpeaking of St. *Hilary* Biſhop of *Poitiers*, ſays, *he wrote with Vehemence, Force and Freedom, yet he was not ſo paſſionate as* Lucifer *Biſhop of* Cagliari, *who wrote Books for St.* Athanaſius, *and againſt* Conſtantius *and the* Arians, WHEREIN HE KEEPETH NO MEASURES, AND HIS TOO GREAT SEVERITY WAS THE CAUSE OF THE SCHISM WHICH HE RAISED IN THE CHURCH[g].

[f] 2 Epiſt. 5. [g] Vol. II. P. 153.

But

But this is an Error which runs through this Gentleman's laboured Performance, that he argues from the Miſtakes and Corruptions of Chriſtians, to leſſen the Advantages we have by Revelation: whereas a Judgment is to be formed of Chriſtianity by what it is, as it lies in the New Teſtament, and not by what it is, when dreſſed up by this or the other Party of Chriſtians.

A. Are Things of the greateſt Conſequence commanded in the Old Teſtament, and forbidden in the New[h]*?*

B. I ſuppoſe here is a Reference unto *Deut.* xiii. 6. a Text cited by *Lucifer Calaritanus* to prove it the Duty of the Orthodox to kill the Emperour *Conſtantius* on account of his *Arianiſm.* Idolatry under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, which was properly a THEOCRACY (for God was their King) was High Treaſon againſt him who was King of *Iſrael*, and was therefore puniſhable by the Civil Magiſtrate; but this may be reckoned ſomewhat peculiar to that People, as they were ſeparated from all other Nations, in their Government, Laws and Conſtitution: but as to all the moral Precepts of their Religion, they do agree with what Chriſt and his Apoſtles have given us under the Goſpel.

And tho' for the Reaſon juſt now given, Idolatry was puniſhable with Death among

[h] P. 271.

the *Jews*, yet I am firmly of the Opinion, it is not puniſhable under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation by any but God himſelf, and as much as this, *Job* in the patriarchal Age plainly aſſerts, where he allows that ADULTERY *was an Iniquity to be puniſhed by the* JUDGES[h]: But afterwards ſpeaking of IDOLATRY, he ſays, *this alſo were Iniquity to be puniſhed by the* JUDGE[i]. The Judge, that is God the Judge of all.

From hence then we may certainly conclude it is utterly unlawful for Subjects to murther their Sovereigns on pretence of their being Idolaters.

A. Hath our Author truly ſtated the Fact, of the *Jews* invading the *Canaanites?*

B. We had this Objection before, *p.* 264. To vindicate this proceeding of the *Jews*, we have no occaſion *to interpret this Fact allegorically, or as only done in Viſion.* It is plain from the whole Hiſtory, that the *Canaanites* were a very wicked People, and yet till *their Iniquity was full*, the *Iſraelites* were not ſuffered to invade them[k]. Did this Writer never read the following Paſſages and others of the like *Nature?* FOR THE WICKEDNESS OF THESE NATIONS *the Lord doth drive them out from before thee*, &c. Had not the *Canaanites* forfeited their Land and Lives into the Hands of

[h] Job xxxi. 11. [i] Ver. 28. [k] Gen. xv. 16.

God?

God? And might he not diſpoſe of them as he pleaſed, without breaking in upon the Law of Nature, which the *Canaanites* had notoriouſly tranſgreſſed?

If he had ſeriouſly conſidered theſe Things in this Light, he might have drop'd this Objection, which hath here taken up four Pages or more.

A. Did not God promiſe to drive out the Canaanites, *and yet the* Iſraelites *could not do it in ſeveral Places*[n] *?*

B. This Objector is very unhappy, in not taking in the whole Hiſtory; for after citing *Jud.* i. 19. he ſhou'd have look'd into the following Chapter, where he would have found the Reaſon why they did not drive them out, *you ſhall make no League with the Inhabitants of this Land, you ſhall throw down their Altars*; BUT YOU HAVE NOT OBEYED MY VOICE, *why have you done this?* WHEREFORE I ALSO SAID, I WILL NOT DRIVE THEM OUT FROM BEFORE YOU, *but they ſhall be as Thorns in your Sides, and their Gods ſhall be a Snare unto you* [o]. I here appeal to all unprejudiced Perſons, *Jews, Chriſtians*, or *ſober Deiſts*, whether our Author doth not appear here to write under a Biaſs for a Cauſe he hath much at Heart, and is reſolved at all Hazards to defend, tho' it be at the Expence of his own Reputation. To

[n] P. 275. [o] Jud. ii. 2, 3.

To this I may add another Inſtance, where ſpeaking of the Tranſactions between *Judah* and *Tamar*, (which none can juſtify) *Judah* ſays, *She* (Tamar) *hath been more righteous than I, and for this Righteouſneſs* (ſays our Author) *ſhe was bleſſed with Twins, from whom the noble Houſe of* Judah *with all its Kings, and the* Meſſiah *himſelf deſcended* [p]. For which I leave him to the Correction of his own Mind, and pray God to give him Repentance, for thus falſifying the ſacred Hiſtory, as well as breaking a profane Jeſt on the Meſſiah our common Saviour; and I heartily pity that Man, who can thus abuſe himſelf and his Readers.

But to return to the Hiſtory: Was not *Tamar* more righteous in waiting for *Shelah*, than *Judah* who never deſigned him for her? Doth the Scripture any where commend this Tranſaction? Much leſs doth it ſay, FOR THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS SHE WAS BLESSED WITH TWINS. Or did the Meſſiah want to derive any Glory from his Anceſtors according to the Fleſh? Yea was it not a kind Intimation, that he came to ſave great Sinners, ſeeing he humbled himſelf ſo low, as to deſcend according to the Fleſh, from ſome who had been great Sinners?

[p] P. 276.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of being governed by Things rather than by WORDS *in Religion.*

A. HAVE not Words been very much altered in their Senſe from what they were originally?

B. I agree with this Gentleman, that the Words, BISHOP, CHURCH, CLERGY [a], and many others uſed by Eccleſiaſtical Writers, have been very much altered from what they were in former Ages; but doth it follow all Words have been ſo altered? Or that in reading the Scriptures we are to lay aſide our Reaſon? Or to depend upon the Opinions of Men as fallible as others, and that we ought not to judge for ourſelves in the beſt Manner we can? And tho' the Words BISHOP, CHURCH and CLERGY, and many others have been changed, is there no Way left of knowing what they did originally ſignify? I know the original Signification of theſe Words, as well as what is the Meaning of them in ſome modern Writers.

A. Is preferring traditional Religion before natural, acting irrationally [b]*?*

B. Chriſtians take in, and are thankful for both, becauſe they are very conſiſtent

[a] P. 319, &c. [b] P. 328.

with

with each other; for tho' natural Religion was perfect in itself, yet Man being imperfect, he wants a Revelation to assure him, God will pardon him upon his Repentance, and afford him all needful Assistance in his sincere Endeavours to please his Maker.

Our Author illustrates his Assertion by the Story of the old Prophet of *Bethel* deceiving the Prophet sent to cry against *Jeroboam*'s Altar there, which he had before mentioned *p.* 244, 245. But this is not a just Parallel, for he should have mentioned a particular Revelation that contradicted natural Religion; instead of that, he refers to an History, in which a pretended Revelation was opposed to a real one, which I think is nothing to the Purpose.

To this he adds the History of *Abraham* and *Sarah*'s lying to *Abimelech*, which he had also given us before, *p.* 243. But now embellishes it, which obliges me to make some farther Reply. I can't forbear observing to my Readers, how fond my Caviller is of repeating, enlarging upon and giving wrong Turns to the Sins of the Patriarchs and other good Men, spoken of in Scripture.

A. Though *Abimelech* in the particular was innocent, yet might he not need *Abraham*'s Prayers on other Accounts? who was an excellent Man, tho' in the Instance, he was the offending Party. *B. God*

B. God commanded Abimelech *to reſtore the Man his Wife, for he is a Prophet, and he ſhall pray for thee, and thou ſhalt live: And if thou reſtore her not, know thou, that thou ſhalt ſurely die, thou and all that are thine* [c]. God thought *Abimelech* wanted *Abraham's* Prayers, and I believe *Abimelech* thought ſo himſelf; but if this Gentleman after all will be of another Mind, and think himſelf wiſer than every one, who can help it?

The Hiſtory ſays, *Abraham prayed unto God, and God heal'd* Abimelech, *and his Wife, and his Maid-Servants; and they bare Children* [d]. *For God had faſt cloſed up all the Wombs of the Houſe of* Abimelech, *becauſe of* Sarah, Abraham's *Wife.*

A. Was this holy Prophet ſoon after guilty of a very barbarous Action, in ſending out Hagar, *whom* Sarah *had given him to Wife, and his Son Iſhmael to periſh in the Wilderneſs, for no other Reaſon, but becauſe* Sarah *had ſeen the Son of* Hagar *mocking* [e]?

B. I might wonder he ſhould call this a very barbarous Action, but my Acquaintance with this Writer teaches me not to wonder at any Thing that comes from his Pen. But why was it a very barbarous Ac-

[c] Gen. xx. 7. [d] P. 17, 18. [e] P. 329.

tion? when he owns, *God himſelf miraculouſly interpoſed in the laſt domeſtick Quarrel, and ſays, In all that* Sarah *hath ſaid unto thee, hearken to her Voice.* Doth he queſtion the Truth of the Hiſtory? Or would he indirectly charge this very barbarous Action on God? But what Reaſon hath he to call it a domeſtick Quarrel? The Hiſtory ſays, *the Thing was very grievous in* Abraham's *Sight, becauſe of his Son* [f]. From which Hint a little Charity might have taught this ſagacious Writer, that *Abraham* did not turn *Hagar* and *Iſhmael* out of Doors raſhly. And why may we not ſuppoſe, that afterwards he took Care of them abroad? tho' on many Accounts it was not adviſeable *Iſhmael* ſhould be kept longer at Home. Some obſerve, Bread and Water in the *Hebrew* ſignify all other neceſſary Proviſions of Life. And altho' *Hagar* and *Iſhmael* deſerved this Treatment, for it is a Saying among the *Jews, that a Servant ought to be puniſhed with Death, who mocks his Maſter or Miſtreſs* [g]: I doubt not, but ſo good a Father as *Abraham* would provide for *Iſhmael,* for he was concerned with his Brother *Iſaac* in the Interment of that eminent Patriarch [h]. By this as well as many other Inſtances, you may plainly ſee, this Gentleman takes De-

[f] Gen. xxi. 11. [g] Syn. in loc. [h] Gen. xxv. 9.

light (ſuch as it is) in expoſing what he apprehends to be the Sins and Follies of great and good Men, which may lead ſome to think he hath herein more expoſed himſelf, ſeeing it appears he hath given wrong Turns to ſeveral plain, hiſtorical Narratives.

A. Hath the laying too great a Streſs upon Words been the Occaſion of moſt of the Diſputes among Chriſtians[i]*?*

B. The laying too great a Streſs upon WORDS OF HUMAN INVENTION hath been ſo, but not upon the Words which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth; for had all Chriſtians kept cloſe to theſe, many doctrinal Controverſies had been prevented, or nipped in the bud. But I am ſurprized to ſee what a mean Opinion this Writer hath of the Underſtandings of his Readers, that in a Book deſigned to cry up Reaſon to the utmoſt, he could ſuppoſe the thirteen Texts he produces, wou'd prove *Moſes* might be a God, if taken literally. This is ſuch egregious Trifling, that it deſerves Contempt inſtead of a Reply, and I can ſcarce believe he was in earneſt, but had a Mind to ſhow his Skill in making the Scriptures a Noſe of Wax, which to us, who have a great Veneration for them, is very offenſive.

A. Is the New Teſtament full of Parables? Becauſe it is ſaid, without a Pa-

[i] P. 331.

rable Jeſus ſpake not to the Multitude[k]*?*

B. There are many Parables recorded in the New Teſtament, it being the uſual Way among the *Eaſtern* Nations. *No Scheme of* Jewiſh *Rhetorick was more familiarly uſed than that of Parables, which perhaps creeping in from thence among the* Heathen *ended in Fables.* —— *The* Jewiſh *Books abound every where with thoſe Figures, the Nation inclining by a kind of natural Genius to this kind of Rhetorick.*——*And our Saviour* (*who always and every where ſpake with the Vulgar*) *uſeth the ſame kind of Speech*[l]. Beſides theſe, there are many hiſtorical Narratives, many Doctrines, Precepts and Promiſes, that are not delivered in a parabolical Way; and tho' it is ſaid, *Without a Parable Jeſus ſpake not to the Multitude*, doth it follow he never did otherwiſe? But he adds, *And for this remarkable Reaſon, that ſeeing they might ſee and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not underſtand, leſt at any Time they ſhou'd be converted, and their Sins be forgiven them*[m]. The parallel Place will afford Light to this, *The Diſciples ſaid, why ſpeakeſt thou unto them in Parables? He anſwered and ſaid, Becauſe it is given unto you to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.* FOR

[k] P. 332. [l] Dr. *Lightfoot* Vol. II. p. 193. [m] Ibid.

WHO-

WHOSOEVER HATH, TO HIM SHALL BE GIVEN, AND HE SHALL HAVE MORE ABUNDANCE: BUT WHOSOEVER HATH NOT, FROM HIM SHALL BE TAKEN AWAY, EVEN THAT HE HATH. THEREFORE SPEAK I TO THEM IN PARABLES, BECAUSE SEEING THEY SEE NOT, AND HEARING THEY HEAR NOT, NEITHER UNDERSTAND. AND IN THEM IS FULFILLED THE PROPHECY OF ESAIAS.—FOR THIS PEOPLE'S HEART IS WAXED GROSS, AND THEIR EARS ARE DULL OF HEARING, AND THEIR EYES THEY HAVE CLOSED, &c [n]. Q. D. Chriſt ſpake to this People in Parables in Judgment, becauſe they had not improved former Means as they ought, and as they might, they had ſeen his Miracles, and yet would not be convinced by what they ſaw with their own Eyes; otherwiſe to Minds rightly diſpoſed, Parables are an eaſy, delightful Method of Inſtruction, but to thoſe who ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light, they are dark and myſterious; for this People were given up to a reprobate Mind, and a Spirit of Slumber.

As for hyperbolical Expreſſions (he allows) *it was cuſtomary among the* Eaſtern *Nations to expreſs themſelves after a moſt pompous and high-ſtrained manner: This way of ſpeaking was a main Point of Learning taught in the Schools of the Prophets among the* Jews [o]. *A.* Might

[n] Mat. xi. 10---16. [o] P. 333.

A. Might not our Author have ſaved himſelf ſome Trouble, and his Readers a little Expence, in citing abundance of Scriptures in the following Pages? If he had conſidered, that tho' they do contain many figurative Expreſſions, yet that for the moſt Part they are well underſtood by the Generality of Chriſtians, or if learned Men differ about the Meaning of ſome Texts, they are not of very great Importance.

B. He ſeems to proceed all along upon this miſtaken Principle (which no Chriſtian will ever grant) that we are to lay aſide our Reaſon in reading and underſtanding the Books of Revelation. But what Chriſtian Writer ever aſſerted this wild Opinion? Or can this Gentleman mention any ancient Book, that in ſome Places have not been variouſly interpreted and underſtood? Eſpecially when ancient Cuſtoms, or old obſolete Phraſes are alluded to? Had the Bible been ſtripped of all figurative Expreſſions, would not the wiſe Men of this World been apt to deſpiſe it? As if it was written only for mean and vulgar Capacities.

I would ask any ſober Deiſt, whether he doth not think, the Generality of well inclined Chriſtians don't underſtand the main Duties required in the Goſpel? for Inſtance, that they muſt look for Salvation through Chriſt, in the Exerciſe of Faith, Repentance and

and univerſal Obedience to the Law of God, tho' they are not able to give the Senſe of ſeveral Texts of Scripture, which are controverted among the Learned.

Upon the whole then, admitting there were ſome Difficulties in this Revelation (God hath favoured us with) which we could not ſolve to our own Satisfaction, would this be a ſufficient Reaſon for rejecting a Book, which is ſupported by ſo much Evidence, from the Accompliſhment of ancient Prophecies, ſome of which are too evident to be denied; as the Coming of the Meſſiah at the Time foretold by *Daniel*, and the Treatment he met with according to that famous Prophecy in *Eſai.* liii. and the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, the Rejection and Diſperſion of the *Jews*, and the calling of the *Gentiles* according to Chriſt's own Prediction in about forty Years after his Aſcenſion to Glory?

Let all the Difficulties, this or any other Objector can raiſe, be put in one Scale, and the Evidence for the Truth of Chriſtianity be put in another, we ſhall ſoon be convinced, that the latter is infinitely heavier than the former.

In reading the Bible, as well as all other Books, what Man of common Underſtanding doth not allow, that we are to be governed by the Senſe, more than by bare Words or Sounds? The

The Queſtion between us is not, whether there be ſome δυσνόητα (Things hard to be underſtood) in Scripture, which St. *Peter* allows [P]; but whether the Difficulties to know the Mind and Will of God in our preſent imperfect State, be not greater without Revelation, than with it. And whether all Men of the meaneſt Capacities could as eaſily and certainly diſcover the Mind of God by the Light of Nature, as we now can by a well atteſted Revelation.

I grant, if Men now were as perfect as *Adam* was when firſt created, natural Religion would be ſufficient; Revelation is therefore aſſerted to be expedient and neceſſary not to ſupply the Defects of the Religion of Nature, which hath none, but to aſſiſt Man, now become an imperfect Creature, to keep the Law of Nature, and to aſſure him of God's Mercy on his ſincere Repentance.

I am not for proving the Imperfection of Natural Religion from the Wickedneſs of the *Gentiles*, leſt this Gentleman ſhou'd turn it upon us, and I think very juſtly, and endeavour to prove the Imperfection of Revelation, from the Wickedneſs of Chriſtians.

But when we conſider the ſmall and very ſlow Advances, Men of greateſt Parts among

[P] 2 Pet. iii. 16.

the

the *Gentiles* made in Knowledge and Virtue, to what the primitive Chriſtians made, *when the Goſpel came to them, not in Word only, but in Power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much Aſſurance*, and Chriſtians lived at another rate than they do in this degenerate Age. I think it wou'd be eaſy to determine, on which ſide the Advantages lie.

Can our Author equal the number of truly pious Perſons, who feared God and worked Righteouſneſs and were kind and benevolent in all the Pagan World for ſo many Ages, as the Apoſtolic Age alone produced? And ſucceeding Ages have not been without ſhining Examples of Piety and Goodneſs.

Neither this Writer nor any other can find fault with the Morality of the Bible, and if the Precepts of it were heartily believed and univerſally practiſed, and the Promiſes throughly believed, what excellent Men wou'd Chriſtians be?

One wou'd think the Inference eaſy and natural, that in a Book that enjoins the Belief and Practice of nothing but what ſober Reaſon approves, when we meet with Actions that don't exactly agree with the main Scope and Deſign of the Revelation, that either the Perſons who did them, tho' in other reſpects pious, yet therein acted out of Character, or elſe by an immediate and extraordinary Impulſe on their Minds, and ſo had

God's Warrant for ſuch Actions, who is above all Laws, and is not to be tied down unto thoſe Rules of acting, that oblige all his Creatures from the higheſt to the loweſt.

Is it to be ſuppoſed, I appeal to this very Gentleman, that Men of common Senſe and Honeſty wou'd agree to write a Book, which throughout recommends JUSTICE, TRUTH AND UNIVERSAL GOODNESS, and at the ſame time relate Facts, which don't agree with ſuch Rules, or are Exceptions from them?

Is it ſuppoſable, that they wou'd not take it for granted, that all their Readers wou'd underſtand theſe as excepted Caſes, either owing to the Imperfection of the Perſons of whom they write, or to a Divine Warrant by which they acted?

It hath been eſteemed a good Argument of the Impartiality and Sincerity of the ſacred Writers, that they have not concealed one another's Faults, and I ſee no Reaſon to think otherwiſe. *Moſes* in Tenderneſs to the Memory of *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, doth not conceal his denying his Wife twice, nor *Jacob*'s getting the Bleſſing by a Fraud, nor his own Paſſion and Impatience at *Maſſah* and *Meribah*, for which he and *Aaron* were excluded *Canaan*, nor the Forwardneſs and Proneneſs of that People to Idolatry. Nor are *David*'s Murder and Adultery, and *Solomon*'s ſad Declenſions in the latter

latter part of Life ſuppreſſed in Silence, no more than the Treaſon of *Judas*, the Fall of *Peter*, and the Cowardiſe of all Chriſt's Diſciples which ſtand recorded in the New Teſtament.

A. Do you intend to make any Remarks on this Author's laſt Chapter, in Defence of D. CLARK's DISCOURSE OF THE UNCHANGEABLE OBLIGATION OF NATURAL RELIGION, AND THE TRUTH AND CERTAINTY OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION?

B. As I did not propoſe the Defence of particular Perſons in my Anſwer, but the Defence of Revelation, ſo I ſhall wholly paſs over this, leaving it to the Clergy to defend the Learned Doctor, and I don't queſtion but ſome one of his intimate Acquaintance, every way better qualified, will take our Gentleman to Task for it.

A. I am obliged to you for the Pains you have already taken, to obviate and anſwer ſo many Objections of this Writer, which I heartily wiſh may give as great Satisfaction to others, as they have done to me.

B. I am glad if I have any way ſerved you, tho' my great Deſign was to ſerve the nobleſt Cauſe, to defend pure and undefiled Religion, as it lyeth in the New Teſtament. I have offered what I truſt thro' God's Bleſſing may be uſeful to the Bulk of Mankind, who cannot read larger Volumes.

I have

I have avoided whatever might have the Appearance of a Provocation and Inſult. For my own Part, I am free every one ſhou'd fairly and modeſtly propoſe their Objections againſt Revelation, that they may receive Satisfaction iu a rational way. We don't call for the ſecular Arm to puniſh Disbelievers, for MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PRÆVALEBIT.

I am far from wiſhing ill to this Gentleman or any other, but all kind of good, and ſhou'd rejoice if any thing advanced in theſe Papers might contribute to the Satisfaction of any, who may have ſome Doubts about the Truth of Chriſtianity.

May the Spirit of Truth and Goodneſs lead us all, in thoſe Paths of Virtue and Piety, that will end in everlaſting Life, where *in God's Light we ſhall ſee Light*, and then the Darkneſs and Uncertainty that attends the very beſt in the preſent State ſhall be done away.

I conclude this Converſation with that Saying of one of the Fathers I have met with in my courſe of reading; *contra Rationem nemo Sanus, contra Scripturam nemo Orthodoxus, contra Eccleſiam nemo Catholicus.*

FINIS.